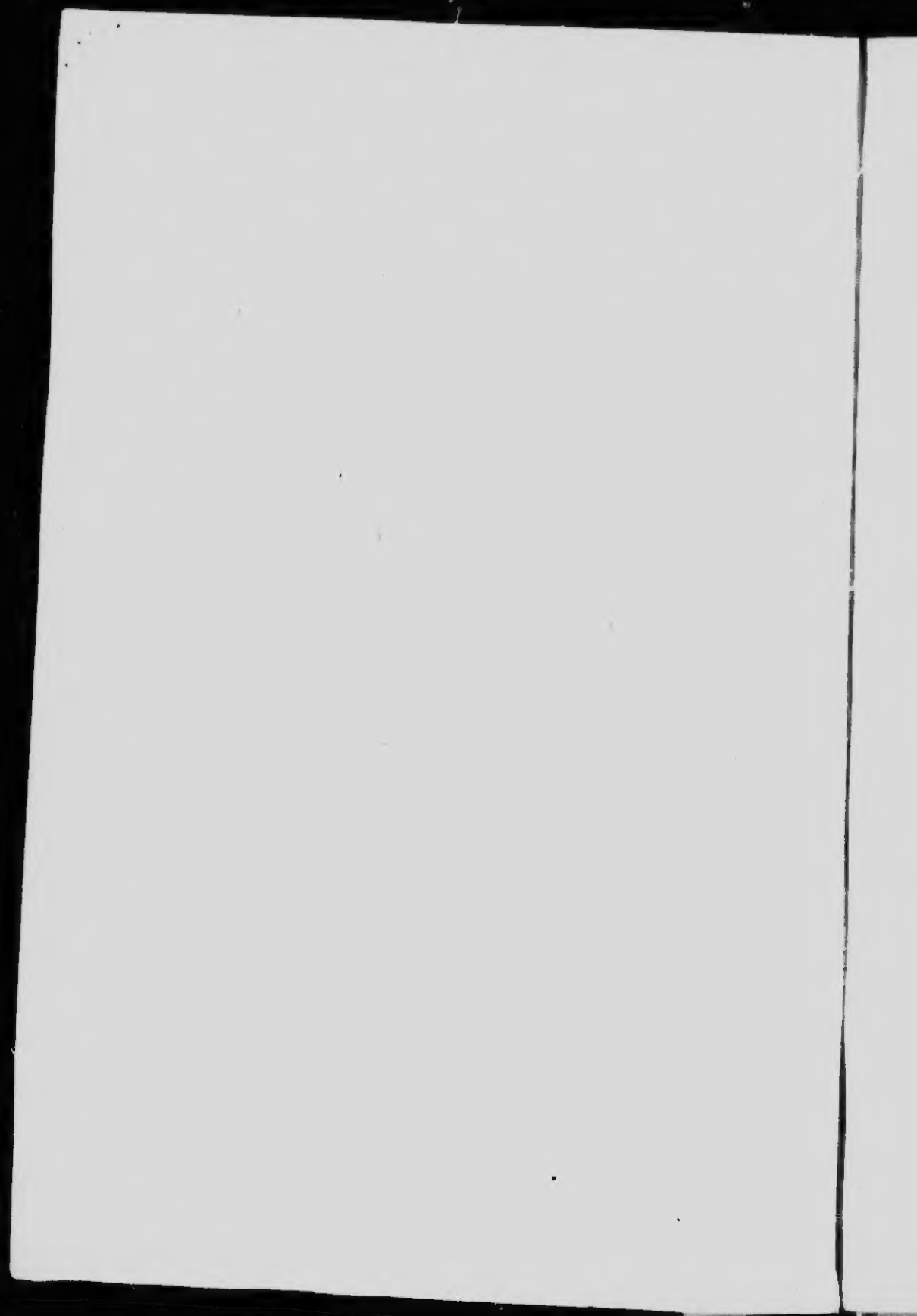


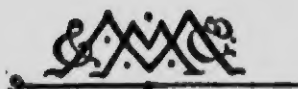
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THE
PRACTICE OF CHRISTIANITY



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THE PRACTICE OF CHRISTIANITY

BY

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PREFATORY NOTE

THE writer is deeply indebted to several busy friends, each of whom has kindly criticised with expert knowledge some section of this book in the making.



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THE COMMONWEALTH OF GOD

CHAPTER I

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The Kingdom of God on earth is a condition of unhindered healthy development. Living organisms show two sorts of progress—normal, healthy growth, and recovery from disease. Humanity must recover from the insanity which embraces evil as good before unhindered progress can begin. No earnest mind doubts that much evil folly could be avoided. There is a natural human ignorance and immaturity, and a blindness and cruelty due to unnatural unkindliness. Christianity teaches that this unnatural unkindness and consequent blindness is rooted in false religion. The Gospel recognises hard-heartedness and consequent ignorance as the cause of faulty religious and moral tradition. The Jew thought his law was of God; our Lord implies throughout Matt. v. that it was the product of human hardness. This hardness was attributed to God, causing idolatry of a false mental image of God. In the religious teaching of any epoch three factors are often confused: (a) God's will, (b) individual interpretation, (c) corporate comprehension expressed in custom. However complete the revelation of Christ, it must receive progressive interpretation

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until all hardness and ignorance are done away. We must, then, admit that, blinded by our hardness, we are liable to consider evil laws and customs righteous and Christian, and to idolise a false mental image of God. Retributive justice, warfare, and the selfish necessities of thrift, condemned by our Lord, are still with us to-day. The practice of Christianity must involve improvement on practices hitherto accepted as excellent. Although we do not see how to reconstruct our customs, one initial duty is required of us all—to purge our own thoughts of acquiescence in evil customs. Metaphor or insanitary wells. The promise of the Kingdom and the character of the Kingdom are the test of what we ought to aim at and what repudiate. Summary.

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advance in directions in which the Church has thus far travelled. Let us ask again, what was the new revelation of God brought by our Lord? No latent wrath in the Divine nature; no infliction of suffering in the Divine activity. But it does not follow that wrath and punishment are not in the universe, and to be reckoned with, just as sin exists and is to be reckoned with. Our Lord insists on the coming judgment. But only good actions and good constructive results are of God. Evil actions and their resulting punishments are wholly evil. For the sake of spiritual freedom God lends His power to self-destructive evil. No attempt in the Gospel to solve the problem of finite and infinite; but good is infinite, evil finite. To dissociate sin from suffering does nothing to solve the problem of evil. Escape from sin and suffering comes in the realisation that the goodness of God is omnipotent. Christian faith must realise more completely all that is involved in our Lord's doctrine of the two Kingdoms. God suffers patiently in man's wrong-doing as in his pain, mental and physical. There is much evidence to show that our Lord's strong grief for sinners was mistaken for anger. Strong grief is all that is useful in the state of emotion we have called righteous anger. Different ways in which human limitation may have coloured our traditional interpretation of the mind of Christ. If we think our moral wrath is needed to purify society, let us remember how recently we thought the massacre of heretics necessary. The cross teaches us that God's love is unwavering and omnipotent.

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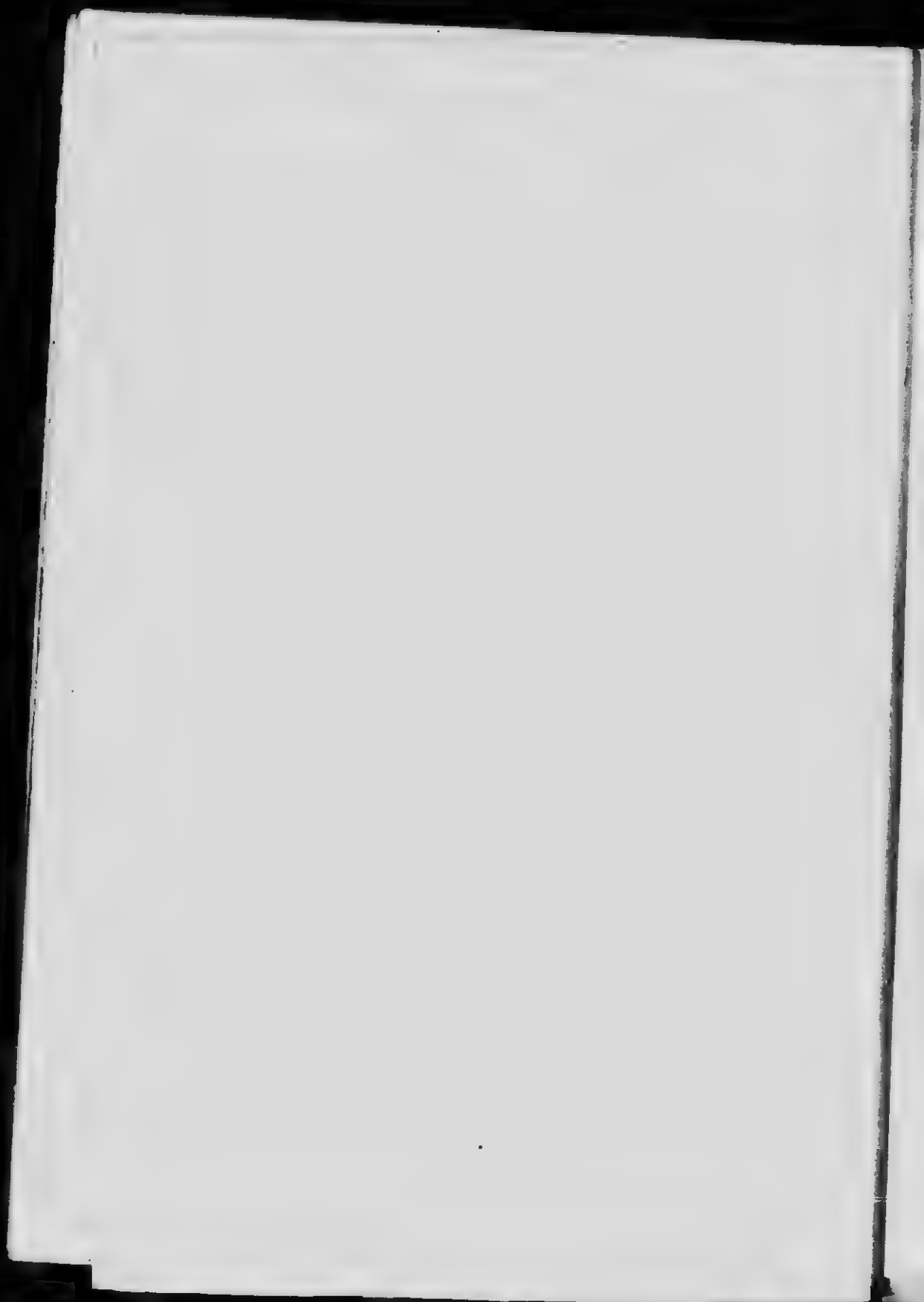
is thus the very Ideal and Reality, the perfection and completion, of all that imperfectly attracts us in any human being. This conception of God helps us to understand the true function of the social unit—the family, which ought never to be broken because of ill-doing or unattractiveness. The weakness of our present conception of family life is its selfishness. Mere altruism panders to selfishness. Devotion to the world's welfare lifts family life to a higher plane.

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BOOK I
THE COMMONWEALTH OF GOD

I

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CHAPTER I

GODLINESS, GOODNESS, AND TRADITION

It is essential to Christian faith to believe that the true life of humanity, the life of unhindered progress, is that Kingdom of God, divinely dynamic, which Jesus declared to be at hand. This will be "the life that is life indeed."

The Kingdom of God on earth is a condition of unhindered healthy development.

There are two forms of progress possible to any living organism—healthy growth from immaturity, and recovery from an ailing or diseased condition. A child makes progress from infancy to manhood ; when attacked by disease he may be said to diverge from the straight line of progress, and must make his way back—from ill-health he must

Living organisms show two sorts of progress—normal, healthy growth, and recovery from disease.

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progress to health. These two forms of progress are different in kind, but they may proceed simultaneously. While slowly recovering from an injury or fever, however, the child's growth toward manhood will not be so rapid or so sound as if he were in normal health. In the same way, a nation may increase and develop its resources and natural character while recovering from a decimating war or plague or famine, but its development will be retarded, perhaps distorted, by the need for recovery. A plant may shake off blight as it grows. A man who has got out of his way may return to the right road at an angle which advances him somewhat on his journey. But these two sorts of progress—that of healthy growth and that of recovery—are distinct, though when we talk of the evolution of humanity they are too often confused, because both have been going on together.

When we get to the condition in which God's will is done on earth, healthy unhindered progress, or growth of corporate

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as well as individual mankind, will, so far as we can conceive, continue as long as mankind shall last. But that form of progress which consists in recovery from our present corporate insanity of sin—that delusion which causes evil to be embraced as good—must first be accomplished. This recovery may be swift or slow; it would appear from the announcement of the Gospel that it ought to be very swift—the Kingdom is within reach if men will.

I do not think any one morally earnest practically doubts the existence of the avoidable evil activity of thought and deed which we are calling “the insanity or delusion of sin.” I once heard an eloquent address which seemed to prove beyond doubt that all that moralists call “badness” or “perversity” is but the healthy growing pains of humanity, that men were always, in each age, as good as they could be. The lecturer proceeded to blame with

Humanity must recover from the insanity which embraces evil as good before un.hindered progress can begin.

No earnest mind doubts that much evil folly could be avoided.

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intense earnestness "orthodox" religious teachers for inculcating the opposite opinion, and accused them of thus obstinately making the world worse instead of better. It was quite evident that his theory of the sinlessness of humanity did not alter his practical belief that the class of men of whom he spoke might have been much better than they were.

To-day it is difficult to formulate a theory of sin. We are what we are because of the ceaseless greed and battle of our progenitors, as well as because of their ceaseless affection and mutual aid. But when science, not satisfied with asserting this fact, confuses it with the inference that we could not have been other than we have been and that we are what we ought to be, the Christian moral instinct stubbornly replies that to-day men are not what they ought to be, and largely because yesterday they might have been better than they were. We know in practice that the youth and immaturity of the race does not account for all our ignorance or our cruelty.

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There is a natural ignorance, but there is also ignorance clearly due to unkindness. The cruelty is often due to ignorance, but that ignorance, again, is often seen to be due to avoidable cruelty. Our Lord's call to repentance, and the proclamation that the Kingdom had drawn near and ought to be won, appear to show that delay in the process of attaining to corporate, as well as individual, moral health is not necessary, rather that it has been, and is, due to such delusions as men could relinquish if they would.

There is a natural human ignorance and immaturity, and a blindness and cruelty due to unnatural unkindliness.

While, then, we may describe the Christian doctrine of sin as the recognition that the corporate mind of humanity has embraced evil as good, and that the natural and healthy growth of the racial mind is retarded by wrong thinking and wrongdoing which it ought to relinquish, it seems also perfectly clear from the Gospel story that our Lord believed that this insanity of sin was to be first traced,

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and first dealt with, in the efforts of man to right himself with God.

Christianity teaches that this unnatural unkindness and consequent blindness is rooted in false religion.

Religion involves the effort to delineate God and His will ; law is the effort to enforce that will ; and it was with the evil in these efforts, both in the Jewish and Gentile world, that the early

Church came into sharpest collision.

In a speech which the author of the Acts of the Apostles reports St. Paul to

The Gospel recognises hard-heartedness and consequent ignorance as the cause of faulty religious and moral tradition.

have made at Athens, ignorance of God's true character is regarded as something other than innocent immaturity of thought : it requires God's mercy to overlook it ; it requires repentance on man's side to nullify it. This

view is echoed elsewhere in the apostolic teaching and when we go back to the Gospel story as the source of Christianity, we find that when our Lord strove to show to His own people the true character of the Father, He began by pointing out that their traditional law was framed in "hard-

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ness of heart." Our conception of right law and of the character of God are at bottom one. We interpret God's nature by our ideas of Good; we interpret the Good by our notion of God. Our Lord and St. Paul, according to the passages just referred to (Mark x. 5, Acts xvii. 30), depict God as unchangeable, and as having the ideal, if immature, humanity always in mind; and on the other hand they depict man as failing to understand God and Good because of hardness of heart and consequent ignorance.

In Matt. v. we find a criticism of the Jewish social laws, with in each case this implication: that the old law was the law of hard hearts, and that the loving kindness of the child of the Kingdom must make a vast advance upon it.¹ What is thus implied throughout this chapter is explicitly stated in our Lord's comment on the marriage law. The Judaic divorce laws well illustrate His point; they show that those who framed them must have

¹ See Note A.

supposed that God regarded woman as a chattel of man, and felt toward an erring or displeasing wife as man felt toward her, or they would not have dared to say, "Thus saith the Lord," of their law, which gave to the man the right of divorce. Our Lord's calm words, "From the beginning it was not so," betoken the conviction of an unchangeable attitude on God's side. The Hebrew commandment arose from human "hardness of heart."

This old Hebrew law took its form in days when man did not treat woman as he himself would like to be treated: his wife could not divorce him. Long years of mutual work and suffering and rearing of children must, in thousands of instances, have taught him that woman might be his

equal or superior in intelligence, and that brute strength was not the dominant factor in family life. Why, then, did he continue to approve laws which exposed woman to treatment that he would not have

The Jew
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throughout
Matt. v. that
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product of
human
hardness.

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counted just had she meted it out to him? The Jew would have said, quite simply and honestly, that God had ordained his marriage law and therefore he could not think of woman as other than the law made her: our Lord says it was "hardness of heart."

The protests made against the hardness of this and various ancient laws from time to time by individual Hebrew prophets betokened and stimulated a growing tenderness of heart in the finer minds of the nation. It is not the law of marriage, or the position of woman, that we are here in particular discussing, but the fact that the finer Jewish minds, under divine inspiration, were outgrowing their legal code; and we see from their prophetic books that this growing tenderness of heart kept pace with their growth in knowledge of Divine love. While the Jews used poetical imagery to express their conceptions of God, the Greeks carved theirs in metal and stone. If we look at the symbols and images of God, either mental

This hardness was attributed to God, causing idolatry of a false mental image of God.

or material, used by all nations, we find—in so far as we understand them—that they keep pace with the social ethic. Good and God are treated as one. The traditional image of God, mental or material, is disregarded or reconstructed whenever the social tenderness of heart and the current knowledge of God get ahead of it. Both represent what the current thought of the age has attained to, but not, our Lord teaches, what it ought to have attained to. Our Lord and St. Paul do not credit God's providence with the faults of our religious tradition.

In the teaching of our Lord and St. Paul we have three factors which in modern teaching have often been confused: (a) the transcendent and immanent God, and His perfect will for humanity; (b) the individual comprehension and interpretation, acceptance or rejection, of that will (it is individuals, hard and ignorant or loving and wise, who must always be the formulators of the law or symbol in the

In the religious teaching of any epoch three factors are often confused: (a) God's will, (b) individual interpretation, (c) corporate comprehension expressed in custom.

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first instance, and, later, the source of its revision or rejection); (c) the corporate comprehension of that will expressed in custom (for the individual mind is, after all, only the voice of the corporate mind, so that none, however humble, may shirk the responsibility of attaining to regal and progressive thought).

The faulty condition of the religious life, which we clearly see in the ancient world, could not come to an end with the Christian era, just because the defect was not on God's side. We have seen that our Lord ascribed defects of ancient religion and ethic to the hard-heartedness and consequent ignorance of men. It is plain, then, that however complete and final the revelation of Christ, that revelation cannot receive worthy interpretation until all hardness of heart and all ignorance have been done away.

I have epitomised the essential causes of our stunted development to draw attention to certain forms of iniquity on which I

However complete the revelation of Christ, it must receive progressive interpretation until all hardness and ignorance are done away.

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venture to think we do not sufficiently reflect—I mean the iniquities that are committed in mistake for righteousness because the tradition of the hard heart still gives them sanction. For example, the greater number of the Jews who, out of enthusiasm for their law, condemned Jesus to death by their angry shouts, no doubt honestly thought they were serving God. Our Lord Himself is said to have recognised this: "Whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service." Again Saul consenting to Stephen's death stands as a type of zealous, God-fearing, self-devoted manhood, the same that has perpetrated crimes against God's humanity in the name of God since the first savage danced round the first human sacrifice.

We have not only all the mistakes and wrong-doing of confessedly religious persecution to count, but also all the mistakes and oppressions of what to our forefathers seemed necessary for the upholding of civilised standards. The law which any age conceives as just is by that age credited

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with divine sanction. Perhaps we can see more vividly the wrong-doing which this mistake produces if we picture it in one not remote period, as the conduct of our own great-grandfathers in the eighteenth century. If the Methodist had not been ostracised ; if the American colonies had not been estranged ; if men had not been cruelly "pressed" into the services ; if felons had not been cruelly hanged for petty offences ; but if, instead of all this, kind and reasonable conduct had obtained, how great, by this time, would have been the gain to the forces of reason and the unity of the Spirit. It is clear that our great-grandfathers consciously interpreted the law of Christian love to justify laws that imposed taxation without consent, that penalised Roman Catholics and Unitarians, that manned the navy with unwilling recruits and hanged a man for stealing a few shillings or harbouring a smuggler ; and that in so doing they could not have comprehended the love that

We must, then, admit that, blinded by our hardness, we are liable to consider evil laws and customs righteous and Christian,

transcends tyranny. But the ideal that God had in mind for them was not affected by their misunderstanding. The hardness of old English law, like the hardness of the old Hebrew law, is not to be attributed either to God's will or to necessity. The character of God, who conceives the ideal humanity, has not changed, although when our forefathers ill-treated their neighbours they said, "Thus saith the Lord," "Such is our Lord and his Christ," while to-day we could not say so. They set up an image of God which we have cast down.

With such a record of history behind us can we reasonably suppose that in this our day our traditional morality recognises accurately the things which belong to our peace? or that we worship the true God?

We find our Lord's great Sermon from beginning to end is a criticism of the ideas and traditions by which the good people of that time lived, and what startles us most in examining the main notions He

and to idolise
a false mental
image of God.

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criticised is that they belong to our own world to-day. They were not at that time peculiar to the Jew, but were common to the civilisation of that day as they are common to our modern civilisation. Warfare, retributive justice, and the selfish necessities of thrift, which He condemned, are still the lamps by which our world is lighted.

When our Lord said that instead of fighting with our enemies we should forgive them and do them good, however malicious they continued to be, He carefully explains that He is not enunciating principles that will abolish law and order ; and yet we object that if we are not warlike the destruction of law and moral tradition will result. Our Lord says that when anger, insolence, and contempt have sway in the heart, killing is no further breach of the law of God. Let us think of that for a moment, and then think of the national and party indignation, national and party acrimony, national and

Retributive justice, warfare, and the selfish necessities of thrift, condemned by our Lord, are still with us to-day.

party contempt, that we think necessary for the maintenance of government at home and of prestige abroad. His criticism of the command which confined itself to prohibiting murder was that it was ruthless, for true morality required the prohibition of any wish to injure one's neighbour. His criticism regarding their tradition of retributive justice was similar: "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth," was a ruthless effort to protect the rights of every member of a community; but the right of every member of a human community is to give and receive absolute love. This, our Lord declares, is a positive, not a mere negative, right. Such a community can only be established by men ready to give up all they possess and life itself in order that the unutterable beauty of the spirit of positive mutual love should be lifted up. Men are told, therefore, not to condemn, not to contend, not to punish. Our moralists are still convinced that any group of persons who should teach this doctrine would be seeking to undermine the moral

CH. I GODLINESS AND TRADITION 19

order, to destroy the law rather than fulfil it. Again, our Lord's criticism upon our economic laws of thrift—"Lay not up for yourselves treasure. Be not careful as to food and drink and clothing"—seems to us destructive of the basis of all civilised life; yet we have His solemn assurance that in setting aside these time-honoured methods of life He did not come to destroy, that the result of obedience would not be anarchy.

We have seen that just in so far as men in the past mistook their moral obligations they mistook the character of God. We see further that the practice of Christianity must consist in following as closely as possible the view that our Lord Jesus Christ took of our moral obligations, in order that we may attain through Him to the knowledge of God; and to this end we must be willing to criticise and improve upon our present moral traditions.

Even though we do not see how to

The practice
of Christianity
must involve
improvement
on practices
hitherto
accepted as
excellent.

reconstruct our customs, there is one duty, evident and inexorable, which the weakest may perform, and from which the most active cannot be excused, and that is determinedly to bring our social customs to the bar of Christ and purge our own minds from acquiescence in evil. Every human being holds within

Although we
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required of us
all—to purge
our own
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acquiescence
in evil
customs.

a well of thought and feeling from which, whether he will or no, his neighbours drink. It is probable that the influence of thought is ultra-sensible, that we derive and give out subtle and unconscious influences which are the more potent because they are unconsciously given and received. However that be, it will be admitted that there is no human being without influence, and that the more the life appears beneficent the more is it likely to be taken as a standard by others. The inward life, then, of the person who sets out to be beneficent is a well of which the world drinks, and the water springing up within it is either pure and life-support-

CH. I GODLINESS AND TRADITION 21

ing or is poisoned, carrying disease and death.

Not long ago I was in a group of people when an item of news was read which suggested that some retreating Turks were about to poison the wells in a region soon to be occupied by one of the allied armies. At the thought of so evil a deed a thrill of visible horror went through the company. But the evil deed of offering poisoned moral wells, not for foes, indeed, but for very friends, is the sin of which we are most intimately and most constantly guilty, both by our negligence and by our zeal. By negligence first, because the insanitary conditions of our wells of thought are not of our own making ; and by zeal when we offer insanitary water to assuage the thirst of the world. A woman recently purchased a country building site, and told me that one of the great advantages of this particular site was that, in a country where water was sometimes hard to find, her site included an old well which never ran dry. She showed

Metaphor of
insanitary
wells.

me some of the water ; it was clear and sparkling, and had a high reputation among the neighbours. Not questioning its purity, but merely for the sake of taking more scientific pleasure in its quality, she sent a sample to the public analyst, and soon received the information that the water was quite unfit for human consumption, the percentage of deleterious matter in it being extraordinarily large.

Each of us has acquired, partly by inheritance, partly by choice, a well of thought and feeling. We live by its water ; we offer it to our guests ; we press its acceptance upon our needy neighbours. But if we call ourselves by the name of Christ we must submit our inherited thoughts and feelings to His analysis. What is most notable and consistent in the impression that His life and teaching made upon the world of His day? Was it not the promise of a new régime in which God's will would be done on earth, and of the baptism of

The promise of the Kingdom and the character of the Kingdom are the test of what we ought to aim at and what repudiate.

CH. I GODLINESS AND TRADITION 23

spiritual power? We need this divine disinfectant—the expectation of the Kingdom—to purify our share of the corporate thought and feeling, and we want the power of divine tender-heartedness to make this purified life of thought and feeling pour through us more strongly.

To sum up: although our conception of God and His will cannot be adequate, it may, as far as it goes, be true, or it may be false. We quite naturally attribute to God all the good we recognise; and if in any particulars we are embracing evil as good, we also attribute evil to God and worship what is false. Looking back through history we see that at every epoch much evil was embraced as good. We see some slow moral progress in history, spite of this embrace of evil as good, but no proof at all that the evil of each age was necessary to that age and a factor in progress. Jesus taught that if His own age repented of its evil customs and mental habits, the reign of God was within their reach! This is essential to

Summary.

Christian faith. Jesus—the outward manifestation of the Eternal Christ—weeping over Jerusalem is the evidence of the constant wrestling of the Creating Logos or Love of God with free subjects in process of making. We are bound, therefore, if we would practise Christianity, to challenge our present customs and opinions to see how far they grieve and misrepresent God. We must not be deterred from the initial duty of personal judgment because we fear its results or because we cannot foresee any corporate result from such individual judgment.

CHAPTER II

THE REPENTANCE DEMANDED BY JESUS

If we would amend our thoughts we must again examine the ideal of human life which our Lord, as a man and a Jew of His age, saw to be practical and to have survival value ; and then consider how far we are able to admit that this practical teaching of His can be followed for the highest advantage of mankind.

What is
practical
Christianity?

Whatever more we may believe about Him, we are bound to regard Him as having that insight into moral values which is the pre-eminent characteristic of the Jewish prophet. Now, every Jewish prophet, while very human and limited by his time,

Our Lord,
as a Jewish
prophet,

exhibited his deep moral insight under three aspects: first, in a fresh conception of the Divine character; secondly, in a fresh conception of the right attitude or poise of the human soul; and, thirdly, in a fresh vision of what might be expected to happen in the future if humanity accepted this fresh belief concerning God and attained this new poise of soul.

What is most noticeable in the progress of the prophetic insight is a clearer and clearer conception of creation as wholly good and tending to a glorious consummation, as contrasted with the very damaged condition of the existing world. Things were in a bad state; man was in a bad state; and the damaged condition was

accepts crea-
tion as good
in essence,
blighted in
condition,
and to be
restored.

not a thing to be resigned to, or to be made the best of. Evil was a thing to be done away with. Our Lord took up the line of this tradition and produced it further. Hunger and thirst after rightness, after wholesomeness, after what was undamaged and wholly good, is the quality

CH. II REPENTANCE DEMANDED 27

that shines through all His actions and all His words.

We can understand this attitude of His more clearly, perhaps, if we picture an ardent Jewish youth of His day observing the common sights and sounds of a Galilean highroad and contrasting them with the splendid prophetic vision of what the will of God as done upon earth would be. He would see birds and animals not wanted by the farmer, caught and nailed living to cross sticks in the fields ; beasts of burden ill-treated as they laboured for men ; song-birds wantonly slain. He would see human types of insanity, loathsome disease, and galling infirmity. He would see the splendid pageant of world-wide power and ordered government, centuries of armoured men in inspiring military march ; and he would see the soldier in common life, hard and prosperous, treading brutally upon the finer sensibilities of better men than himself. He would hear stories of the courts that under the semblance of justice punished the unfortunate. He would see

opulence luxurious and despotic, and poverty servile and greedy. And through it all he would see the good impulses in men's hearts bringing forth good wherever they came to fruition, lightening the burden, turning the scale of life on the side of joy rather than of sorrow, and he would see that the impulses of greed and anger and hatred were everywhere marring the good and producing misery. Such a youth, contrasting the evils which he saw with the splendid prophetic picture of what the reign of God on earth must be, would have his whole faith in God staked on their abolition.

Thus we find that to our Lord existing evils were not tolerable: an unforgiving temper, a temper of contempt or selfishness between man and man, was not to be tolerated; the enjoyment of wealth, material or spiritual, of which all men were not freely offered a share, was not to be tolerated; poverty was not to be tolerated; oppression and imprisonment were not to be tolerated; disease was not to be

tolerated. While man must be patiently dealt with, no evil was to be regarded as necessary.

Long before this the Greeks, looking abroad upon life with child-like eyes, had decided that disease and poverty, dishonour, and the lack of family affection and of social intercourse, were the evils of life. This marks a very simple and straightforward standard of good and evil, and we find it corroborated in the insight of the Jewish prophets, although lifted into the higher altitude of the theocratic vision. So in the Gospels we find that our Lord proclaimed as acceptable to God the healing of disease, the enriching of the poor, the release of the captive; and a man who would be acceptable to God must hold his mind in an attitude of generous respect and affection to all men. Whoever should dishonour his brother or judge his brother was said to be disapproved of God. Whoever was richer than his brothers was told to share all that he had with them. It was not poverty

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that our Lord desiderated, but rather the relieving of surrounding poverty; it was not suffering He desiderated, but the refusal to be at ease while others were suffering; it was not acquiescence in any form of injury whatever that He demanded, but the refusal to oppose self-seeking to self-seeking, force to force, anger to anger, scorn to scorn—a refusal which would involve temporary submission to injury. He proclaimed the advent of an absolute and universal good—a good not of unclad spirit but of material creation thoroughly conformed to spirit. When He wishes to express the great kindness and goodness of the Father, He speaks of the hairs of the head as being numbered, of the needs of the body as being observed and supplied, and citizenship in the kingdom of love offered to the unthankful and the evil. To our Lord humanity was a part of natural creation, and creation was wholly good; evil was unnatural; God was wholly on the side of health and sanity

and plenty and security, and a nobler and more strenuous civic life than the world had imagined.

Now, while we are bidden by many scholars to believe that we cannot, even in imagination, enter into the way in which our Lord supposed this was to be brought about—so remote, we are told, was the symbolism of that day from ours—by others we are led to suppose that He looked to a merely ethical process to bring about the reign of God ; but the main thing for us to centre our minds upon is, that it was nothing less than this reign that He bid men seek, and seek with a determination, a ceaseless energy, an indomitable purpose, so strong that it could know no failure, could not come short of absolute success ; and He bid men believe nothing less than that God was at one with this indomitable purpose to obtain a universal and untarnished good, at once inspiring and rewarding it. Our Lord dissociates Himself from any tolerance of a partial good, a separated or exclusive advantage, an

imperfect condition, or the conceit that the perfection of one class of men could be secured at the expense of another class. Little light is given to us as to how

The
regeneration
of corporate
humanity to
be believed
in, sought and
found, at all
costs.

our Lord thought that nature, human or otherwise, had come to be damaged. What is very clear is that He knew intuitively that this damage was not of God, and that man had a part to play in the restitution. Man must repent of connivance with, or resignation to, or making the best of, evil. That splendid vision of a perfect state which, through the long line of Hebrew prophets, had been seen and depicted with ever-growing simplicity and home-like beauty, was what He called the reign of God, the Kingdom.

Just here we come to the connection between the individual salvation and the

The unique
connection in
Christianity
of individual-
ism and
collectivism.

corporate salvation. It is precisely this connection which has made Christianity the splendid vehicle of the tribal, social, conception of religion characteristic of the

Semite and of all social and co-ordinating temperaments, and also of the individual and mystic conception of religion characteristic of the Aryan and of all inward-turning and particularising temperaments.¹ The theocracy of God was also a democracy on the human side, because the Kingdom was to be within the heart of every man. If the guidance and government of God is within the heart of every man equally, it is obvious that the ideas of theocracy and democracy are absolutely blended. But what is this Kingdom within? Does it impel to the seeking of personal salvation, personal union with God, irrespective of the conditions of the world? If we regard our Lord's earthly life as the normal manifestation of one who holds the Kingdom within, we find that its fruit was the inauguration of a new world-order, in which the sick were to be healed, the lame were to walk, the captive was to be

¹ For a study of these two currents in the N.T. see Prof. B. V. Bacon's little book, *The Making of the New Testament*, especially p. 247.

released, the blind were to see, and the ignorant were to be enlightened. Missionary enterprise of the broadest and most humanitarian type is the keynote of our Lord's teaching. Even in His portrait as drawn in the Fourth Gospel—written, as we believe, to set forth the inward, mystical type of religion—we have Him represented as appealing to His missionary deeds: "If the deeds I do are not my Father's deeds, do not believe me; but if they are, then, even if you do not believe me, at least believe the deeds, that you may know and see clearly that the Father is in me."¹ Again, we have the lesson of the feet-washing: "Ye ought also to wash one another's feet." And we have also that vision of the universality of salvation: "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." And the Spirit indwelling in His followers is to convict the world of sin and righteousness and judgment.

Thus the Kingdom of God, when really

¹ John x. 37-8. Weymouth's translation.

within men, makes for the Kingdom of God manifested in outward conditions. Individual Christian piety is the recognition of the mission of the individual to the world that lies about him, and the faith that the reign of God clothed in human custom is within reach.

Men are told to seek first the universal reign of God, that is, to seek it with all their energy, because it includes The Kingdom includes individual communion and world reformation. both individual communion and social redemption. They are to believe in the coming of the life that includes both these—to seek it till they find, to knock at its door till it is open, to ask for it until they receive it, casting away all that they have of imperfect goods in order to obtain the perfect treasure.

In our Lord's day there seem to have been three classes of earnest-minded Jews. In one the tendency was to make the best of the existing world, to come to a compromise with Gentile culture and Gentile policy. Another class resigned themselves

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passively to evil, expecting a Divine deliverance. And yet another thought to co-operate with God by taking arms against their oppressors. Upon all these alike our Lord urges repentance. It is neither by compromise with evil, nor in passively suffering evil, nor by opposing force to evil, that men can expect good. It is by

Summary. faith in God as the bestower of all good and good only, and by unswerving co-operation with this divine outflow of good to an evil world. This is the repentance and faith He looked for ; and He was then disappointed.

CHAPTER III

THE DIVINE METHOD

WE must interpret the allegory of the Temptation, and the portrait of the Christian man sketched in the Beatitudes, in the light of the connection just pointed out between the inward and outward life of the Kingdom, in the light of our Lord's indomitable purpose to seek the condition of earth in which God can again look upon all creation and see it "very good."

From the story of the Temptation we gather that Jesus was at first uncertain, when realising His call to the Messiahship, as to the method by which He should inaugurate the universal Kingdom. Would He not naturally consider the

Three popular methods of world-conquest set forth in the allegory of the Temptation.

three ways of obtaining power over men common at that day?

(a) There was a method of gaining control of the world which might be called the method of largess—the bestowing of unlimited and unearned food on idle multitudes. This was a way of obtaining popularity used time and again by Eastern despots and Roman potentates. Nothing so stirs the compassion of a healthy and well-regulated mind as the thought of men and women prowling hungry, unable to obtain the very means of life. This thought of giving food to the hungry was evidently one of the constant ideas in our Lord's mind. He identifies Himself completely with the starving: "Then shall the Son of Man say, I was hungry and ye gave Me meat . . . I was hungry and ye gave Me no meat." He is represented as unable to send away a hungry multitude lest they should faint by the way. He constantly urges the duty of giving to the needy: the young ruler was to give all that he had to the poor; Dives is con-

demned for no other crime than enjoying wealth that he did not adequately share. And yet in the first temptation we see Jesus regarding Himself as the typical man and realising that to win the heart of the world by using the power to make unlimited bread to satisfy human hunger was antagonistic to God's purpose. In our Lord's later teaching God is represented as making His sun to shine and His rain to fall alike upon the evil and the good, as creating that marvellous power in a grain of corn to multiply itself into bread; and it is by this provision and word of God—that is, by the natural method, in itself wholly good—that man must arrive at the material things of life if he would also have his moral being educated and undefiled. The importance of this divine method of food-production, and the educative value of human husbandry, are ideas which run through all our Lord's teaching concerning the attainment of both material and spiritual goods. Thus, the making of stones into bread was rejected by Jesus as a method of conquering the world.

(b) One idea of the coming Messiah was that He should become the Master of the military kingdoms of the world by using the method of those kingdoms. The salient method of conquest and government in His day, as in ours, was physical force, in itself a crude method both of conquering and governing men. It was a method not only physically intrusive, but morally cruel, stirring up everywhere anger, wrath, malice, fear, and evil-speaking. It was a method not only cruel, but also in itself inefficacious, because the spirit of warfare and retaliation and vengeance is infectious, and the weaker, if only governed by force, will but bide their time to use the same methods in revolt. A conquered nation, if ruled by force, will, as soon as it is stronger, conquer its conqueror; the criminal class, hunted by jailers and executioners, will, the moment they have the chance, execute and imprison their judges. The tyrannous temper is infectious; its infective power is cumulative; to our Lord's unutterable love for men this

method was repugnant, it was a method which had grown up in the damaged condition of things and belonged to the spirit of a damaged world, and He absolutely rejected it. He did not reject the end for which it is used—the conquest of the world and the moral government of its lapsed masses; but true kingship could only be attained by working with God, and thus the power of the sword and the power of the dungeon were symbolised as Satan-worship. The conception that compulsion, or intrusion on personal liberty, is evil runs through all our Lord's teaching.

(c) There was another method of bringing about the Messianic Kingdom, it was that of urgent prayer that the order of nature God had established should be broken up.¹ This prayer seems to have been accompanied by ascetic practices which attest its impatient insistence. It arose from despair of the power of all natural agencies to bring about good. Hope was transformed into a determination that God

¹ *Quest of the Historical Jesus*, A. Schweitzer, p. 355.

should intrude His supernatural good upon humanity by a dramatic miracle. Such crude eschatological hope implied that God's present plan of creation had failed. We cannot ignore this in any wistful examination of the symbolism of the Temptation. The Israelites at Massah and Meribah are pictured as feeling analogous despair in their physical thirst, chiding and complaining in their demand for miraculous water.¹ To pander to the condition of mind which refuses to trust God unless nature is to be broken into by miracle, seems to have been the temptation here symbolised. To reject nature in favour of an imaginary super-nature seems to be the last infirmity of spiritually-minded men. Our Lord's great love to God and man made Him love and trust created nature. Consonance with nature's intention and working is one continuous thread in the web of His sayings. He would not tempt God by the demand for a sign, even though the demand grew out of a thirst for righteous-

¹ Exod. xvii. 1-7 ; Num. xx. 1-13 ; Deut. vi. 16.

ness as real as the physical thirst of the wilderness.

Having rejected all these methods, what line of action did He decide this indomitable search for the Kingdom was to take? Let us go to His own teaching for an answer to this question.

The Sermon on the Mount may be supposed to be, in the main, a compendium of our Lord's teaching. It is possible that He Himself constantly repeated the staple of His teaching in order that the incisive sayings might sink deep into the minds of the hearers, and varied the order of the sayings and their number according to the needs of each congregation.

The idea underlying all the Sermon seems to be that God is good and all creation is good as far as it follows God's intention; that man is good as long as he will obey the naturally good impulses of his heart, enlarging such impulses as he naturally feels toward his own children and friends to embrace the universal brotherhood.

God is all
good, and all
good is of
God.

In our Lord's imagery, the reign of God equals all blessings. To be blessed is to attain, or to be attaining, the Kingdom.

It is probable that Matthew's order of the Beatitudes is one in which they were frequently given—a description of the ideal Kingdom-seeker.

The portrait
in the
Beatitudes.

Men were on the right track, they were at one with God's purpose, blessed, and in a sure way to success, when they were teachable in spirit, in cheerful control of their own spirits, broken-hearted because of the imperfection of things as they are, insatiable in their desire for social righteousness, full of fellow-feeling, simple and undivided in purpose, always ready to allay the indignation of their brothers, happy in enduring the anger of their fellows when brought upon them by the pursuance of their purpose in the temper indicated.

Further analysis will, I think, show us that this description of the Kingdom-seeker embodies what we call common sense as well as heavenly wisdom.

How does the intelligent man naturally act in relation to lower nature if he wishes to be blessed in that relation?

In the first place, he is teachable. He watches the signs of the weather to learn when to sow his field, when to shelter his flock, when and how to perform all the operations of agriculture; how best to obtain fish from the sea, to navigate the ocean with his cargoes and the desert with his caravans. He is patient to discover the habits of nature and to get control of wind, water, and electricity. These must be studied before they can be used. To learn from experience is to be teachable, is to be poor in spirit. The man who is arrogant towards nature accomplishes nothing. We cannot too often be reminded that our Lord regarded humanity as part of nature—part of that which God, by the insight of the prophet, had been seen to pronounce good—self-damaged now, but still part and parcel of God's creation, to be dealt with according to

The blessed man must have that teachableness required by all art, science, and common sense.

those methods which experience should prove effectual, to be watched, studied, co-operated with. The man who was arrogant toward his fellow-men would not succeed in the search for the Kingdom; it was the teachable, or poor in spirit, whom He saw to be blessed in this matter.

Being ready to learn how to make things right, what is the next temptation that assails the observer—the man who is satisfied that nature at bottom is good, and is ready to co-operate with her? Undoubtedly it is contentment—the desire to make the best of things as they are, the belief that what is at bottom so good will inevitably work out the best result, whether man accepts or rejects evil. Such a frame of mind could be no instrument of the divine purpose; it is that passion for good which produces an inconsolable sense

of misery at the damaged and
 He must not
 tolerate evils,
 but must
 always mourn
 over them.
 wrong condition of things that
 alone is at one with God. As
 a child weeps over a broken
 toy and will not be satisfied until it is

mended ; as a gardener groans over a blighted blossom, and will not rest until he has produced the perfect flower and the perfect fruit ; as a mother agonizes at the bedside of a sick child ; as a monarch feels anguish at the sight of his routed armies—so men must mourn if they are to be blessed of God in the search for the Kingdom.

What, then, is the temptation natural to the man thoroughly aroused to a perception of the sin and misery of the world ? Is it not impatience ? Is it not anger that any time process should intervene between the wrong and the righting of the wrong ? In considering what our Lord meant by meekness, we have to bear in mind that He chose His chief friends, chose those whom He thought best fitted to be fishers of men and to carry on the spread of His doctrine concerning the Kingdom, from the most arduous and perilous calling that was open to His neighbours in Galilee. They had been successful fishermen in waters subject to sudden squalls and dangerous currents ;

He must
exercise
economy of
spiritual force.

they had pursued their calling in boats that we should consider mere cockle-shells. It is this sort of experience that teaches a man that poise of spirit in which he can pursue his determined purpose while exercising immense patience in the face, not only of times of long discouragement, but of the sudden and furious opposition of the elements. We know that a fisherman who became angry when the wind buffeted, who raged at the apparently demoniacal fury of the tempest, who lost his temper with the icy chill of winter, and spent his strength cursing the almost intolerable heat of the summer day, would not, as a matter of fact, be a successful fisherman. We may not at first glance see the connection between a dignified poise of spirit and the achievement of the fisherman's end; it probably lies in the value of reserve strength and a mind undistracted by futile passions—*i.e.* in spiritual economy; but in any case it is there. He who would deal with nature and achieve his ends must, as modern science has well taught us, not

only be willing to learn from nature by experience, not only refuse to be satisfied with the present imperfect control of natural forces, but must, in his unconquerable, persevering determination to discover the secret of control and use that secret for human ends, exercise infinite patience as well as infinite courage. We have lately had our minds filled with thoughts of the privations suffered by an Antarctic expedition. Its failure is attributed—in words free from any trace of complaint, written by the leader just before his own tragic end—chiefly to continued bad weather. Nothing seems to the way-faring man so futile, so enraging, as a continuous bad wind; yet the whole civilised world recognises that the force of spirit required in the worthy or successful adventurer does not admit of anger at the opposition of nature. A retaliative or punitive attitude towards nature is not only futile, it is not only the root of all cursing, but it saps, in the well-spring of the individual life, those forces that make

for success. Such a spirit often marks the weak or ineffective man even in his relation to inanimate nature ; toward animate nature it becomes cruelty. Any such vindictive temper is not the scientific temper ; it is not the temper that marks moral progress. It is by indomitable meekness of temper that men shall inherit the earth, because meekness is the great law of individual and social economy.

Meekness is only possible, in its perfection, to the most virile and kingly minds. It is the wise, adult determination of spiritual expenditure, as contrasted with childishly futile and wasteful methods of such expenditure. It is domination of individual and corporate social forces in contrast to resignation to individual and corporate anti-social passions. It is the great principle of wise economy in the effort to control nature, and especially human nature. He who can substitute in himself reason for wrath ultimately substitutes reason for wrath in his fellows, and gains an ascendancy stronger than any

other form of human ascendancy. It is only the meek who, in the nature of things, can inherit the earth.

But, again, to those who set out upon the determined quest of the Kingdom, who are teachable in spirit, who are inconsolable because of the self-damaged condition of the human race, who possess that poise of soul which is the true economy of spiritual force, returns the temptation to be satisfied with too little. Just as being willing to learn from nature tends to make us ready to rest in mere contemplation, so being patient and long-suffering with human nature inclines us to be too willing to be reconciled to human faults. The coming of the Kingdom depends upon hunger and thirst for the highest virtues of citizenship.

"Righteousness" (*Δικαιοσύνη*) was a social virtue. It means that upright dealing between man and man upon which all civic virtue is based. Without appropriate civic conditions it is impossible; hence it is folly to speak of the ethic of the Gospel as being

He must
hunger for a
perfect social
righteousness.

a merely individual righteousness. And this righteousness is conformity to a standard identical with nothing less than our conception of the highest good, which is God's will. It would appear that Jesus was in the habit of using in His public teaching, some such phrase as, "Be ye perfect as your father in heaven is perfect," as the standard of all the virtues, individual and social. To be satisfied, then, with nothing less than perfect uprightness in social dealing is essential to being at one with the power of God and seeking the Kingdom.

Ah, but how easy, then, to be censorious! No one is more apt to be censorious than he whose heart is set upon social uprightness. And here, again, He must not be censorious, but in harmony with God's mercy. is the balancing virtue. To be in harmony with God in this determination to realise the Kingdom it is necessary to be in harmony with that divine quality that we call mercy.

Having been given Jesus Christ's vision of God, Christians would seem very greatly

to wrong their God when they entreat mercy in their prayers. Such entreaty implies that He could be other than merciful. God is mercy. To appeal to Him is to appeal to the very source and fount of every thought we have of mercy ; and it is only by great and ever cumulative increase of human mercy that man can work in harmony with God—blest of God and therefore successfully—for the Kingdom, that Kingdom in which alone mercy shall become an unvarying attribute of humanity and cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.

Peace-making has a very necessary connection with mercy. There are two great sources of enmity between men ; the one is the primitive and natural anger of the selfish man, the other is the more advanced indignation born of a little unselfishness—anger at what misleads the ignorant, anger at what causes the suffering of the weak, anger at the despoiling of the just. When our neighbours are injured by storms or earthquakes or conflagration, we no longer

try to exorcise the evil in the elements by angry incantations. But when our fellow-men, following their own self-damaged natures, do evil to our neighbours, we are still childish in our idea that rage and warfare are God's method of righting the wrong. All the worst wars have been wars of righteous indignation fought in God's name.

What is the chief office of a peace-maker? To find out causes of misunderstanding and remove them; to find out causes of lack of sympathy and remove them; to impress upon men that if what appears to them the wrong-doing of men is actual and obstinate, the He must seek to allay the passion of indignation. anger of one man cannot be the remedy for the obstinacy of another; that warfare against the sinner will not put an end to his sin; and that it is futile to attempt the vindication of the oppressed by any method that increases the sum of the world's suffering and sin rather than diminishes it. Obviously He who said that peace-makers were *par excellence* of the very nature of

God—children of the very nature of the father—could not have thought that warfare was a method of decreasing the sum of the world's sin and suffering. It is also of the office of the peace-maker to persuade the indignant that the universe is so ordered that wrong-doing is not only its own worst punishment, entailing with absolute certainty worse consequences for the sinner than any man can inflict upon him, but that the universe is so ordered that God must suffer with the sinner all evil that befalls him on account of his sin, and for that reason it is profanity to think it right to hasten or increase that punishment.

All this method of working for the spread of the Kingdom is not a method of the world; and for that reason those who thus work will necessarily endure contumely and injury from the world—angered against what must always appear to it at variance with its conception of the laws of nature and of God. Persecution does not come from those who are not keen for law

He must be
the sort of
reformer who
will evoke
persecution.

and custom and creed ; it comes always from those convinced that their customs, law, and creed are right and ought not to be violated. Persecution comes only upon men intent on a reform. Even when the reform is in truth reactionary it is still an effort to reform what is ; and all such effort is, surely, taken up into the great purpose of God and used to bring about His universal dominion, in sharing which the persecuted reformer will realise the blessing which has always been his. It seems to be a law of humanity that it is not possible even for Divine Love to reform men without arousing in them a persecuting spirit.

It would appear, then, that our Lord believed He could achieve the speedy coming of the Kingdom if He could evoke in a sufficient number of men the realisation of what was truly good or blessing and the determination to bring about the reign of Good by practising this rule of life prescribed by Him.

In this and the preceding chapter I

have tried to show that the repentance to which our Lord called men was far from being an individual and fatalistic resignation to evil as the will of God ; and that the faith that He tried to evoke in them was that nature was fundamentally good, and would be restored to complete goodness if there was a corporate repentance from all acquiescence in evil.

CHAPTER IV

THE REGULATIVE VIRTUE

IN order to realise the extent of the corporate acquiescence in evil which to-day we all share, I would urge three initial considerations :

- I. The necessity for a supreme and regulative virtue.
- II. That insight into the nature of good is as necessary as good intention.
- III. That such insight only comes through the regulative virtue of loving-kindness.

I. If we reflect upon the historic crimes against humanity, and the historic movements that have retarded the advance of freedom and order, we shall see that to carry them out required certain virtues, and

Many virtues
are required
for the
support of
evil causes.

that in carrying them out men must have been strengthened in these virtues. Consider what class of virtues are consonant with, and as a matter of history have been exercised in, bad activities. They are, courage, sincerity, loyalty, esprit de corps, obedience, self-denial, temperance, and that amount of kind-heartedness that makes a man benevolent to those who do not contradict him. All these are required in every unjust war, in every form of political oppression, in religious persecution, in corporate commercial crimes. No cause is strong that is backed only by those who break the law of right they themselves recognise.

And these virtues are necessary alike to any strong corporate action and to any individual who by his character would exercise power. By such virtues men make themselves potent instruments either of good or evil, and in either case they remain in themselves virtues; for it is a nobler thing to be a good instrument than an indifferent or a poor one. But

these virtues, though they make a strong character, do not of themselves make a good one ; they need a supreme virtue to regulate them if the character possessing them is to be called good. It is clear from our Lord's parables that He admired all these virtues, but He did not exalt them as we do. A nominal Christian to-day may have all these virtues and yet have a very false conception of God and His Christ, conceiving Him as a tyrant and oppressor, or as crafty, laying traps for men by offering a way of salvation that

is not obvious to the common conscience even when awakened, or as super-imposing a surface goodness. And both his own character and the ideals for which he works will reflect a man's conception of God. We do not sufficiently recognise that many virtues combined do not make goodness. If the worst deeds the world has yet seen have been done by characters which we to-day, with our Christian education, are still apt to call

Goodness
must consist
in what
makes a man
not only a
good instru-
ment but an
instrument
of good.

"good," it is clear that we have an inadequate notion of goodness.

Consider this quotation from a dispassionate onlooker: "Probably throughout history the worst things ever done in the world on a large scale by decent people have been done in the name of religion, and I do not think that has entirely ceased to be true at the present day. All the Middle Ages held the strange, and, to our judgment, the obviously insane, belief that the normal result of religious error was eternal punishment. And yet by the crimes to which that false belief led them they almost proved the truth of something very like it. The record of early Christian and mediaeval persecutions which were the direct result of that one confident religious error comes curiously near to one's conception of the wickedness of the damned."¹

We are not yet Christ-like enough to

¹ Prof. Gilbert Murray, *Four Stages of Greek Religion*, p. 22

say that Christian persecutors were not good men—some of us think they were very holy men—but if our notion of admirable character does not include something which not only makes a man a good instrument, but makes him an instrument of good purpose only, it falls short of what is required for the world's salvation ; and we Christians ought to ask ourselves whether it does not fall short of what is required for the practice of anything that may rightly be called Christianity, or for the formation of Christian character.

II. Again, the Christian religion teaches that our Lord was the only human being who ever gave God perfect obedience ; and we very often hear this interpreted to mean that our Lord's greatest characteristic was His willingness to do whatever He thought right and nothing that He thought wrong. Indeed, it is often implied that no other human being ever acts, even for a short time, in entire and absolute loyalty to the accepted will of God. For example, I

have read treatises upon the problem of prayer wherein it was clearly intimated that whenever, even for a short time, the human will was entirely surrendered to what was recognised as God's will, the prayers of such a person would have an efficacy unknown at any other time, and the whole power of God would, as it were, flow through him in religious work—statements which clearly imply that loyal obedience to God's accepted will is exceedingly rare. There is from the common sense of the world a very natural protest against such teaching as artificial. Although there can be no question at all that the ordinary man has many a battle, and sometimes a prolonged battle, to bring his action into accord with his conscience, it is also true that humanity knows many enthusiasms, many heroisms, many passionate affections, which for shorter or longer intervals unify a man's whole being and inspire him with an unswerving loyalty to many a purpose that he believes to have

Our Lord's
unique
goodness
consisted not
more in
loyalty of
will than in
insight into
God's will.

the divine sanction. We may believe that the ideal Human Character must have differed from other men in having been in this respect perfect where other men have only partially succeeded ; but to speak as if loyalty and obedience and self-denial were never perfect in other men is to miss the mark. The mother to her offspring, the savage to his tribe, the Roman citizen to Rome, the Pharisee to his nation, the early soldier of the Crescent to Mahomet, the Jesuit to the superiors of his order, the modern stockbroker to the Trust that employs him, have been undoubtedly loyal with an undivided loyalty that death itself did not dismay. All these have offered, often for long periods, undivided allegiance, with no introspective waverings, to what stood to them for Good or God. The main difference between such loyal or enthusiastic men and Jesus Christ lay in the difference between His insight into God's will and theirs.

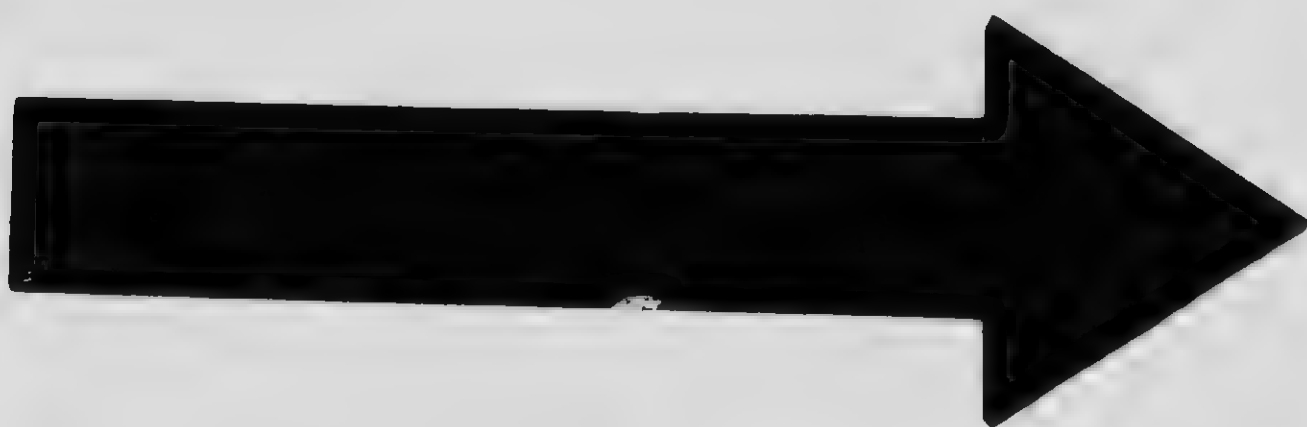
III. I think it will be found that the key to the difference between our Lord's

insight into the will of God and all previous conceptions of Divine law is just the tenderness of heart, the constant impulse to loving-kindness, which is so obviously the basis of His thought and action.

His loving-kindness gave Him this insight.

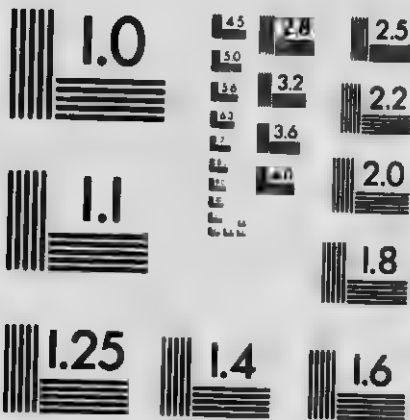
As Jesus grew up and lived in Galilee He saw life around Him ; He heard—for the country was a highway of travel—something of what was going on in the world at large ; He heard of wars and rumours of wars, conquests of the sword that had been and yet might be. He saw, and came in contact with, law and government ; and He saw how men dealt with one another about property, and how they lived together in social relation ; and it is astonishing how much the few words we have of His show what He thought of it all. There was a great deal that was good, and all that He speaks of as good may be summed up in the phrase, the tender heart. The father who gives good gifts to his children is

In His criticism of life Jesus exalts natural kindness and trustfulness as the foundation of all goodness.



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represented as the average father, and is yet elevated into the type of God. The little child that clings and joyfully trusts—the ordinary, average child—is elevated into the type of the enlightened soul. There is the kindliness of friendship that will not deny a neighbour's request, a friendship which every ordinary man is said to possess, which is used as the type of the friendliness of God. There is the free, unmerited mercy of judge or creditor or taskmaster, held up as the type of the generosity of God. So that we have the natural kindliness and trustfulness of human nature exhibited, not only as good, but as the only foundation of goodness, the essential of entrance into the Kingdom, the only garment in which the soul may remain in the Kingdom. He spoke to all men everywhere as though they all had within themselves the direct heart-knowledge of love and neighbourliness and mercy which united to form the standard of value to which He always appealed. It could only have been kindly and loving men whom He could have in-

structed concerning the Father in heaven who numbered the very hairs of the head, who suffered in the death of every sparrow, who cared for the ravens and clothed the lilies; men who had it not in them to appreciate the Divine character could never have received and handed on this instruction. It was to the heart-knowledge of such men He appealed.

The distinction between goodness and badness of heart as equivalent to tenderness or hardness is so instinctive, Distinction between a good and bad heart simple and instinctive. so simple, so common, that we overlook it.¹ To us it seems a weed, to be prized only when improved and rendered less hardy by much cultivation. Yet the little child and the simplest savage call tender-heartedness good and hardness bad. Severity, cruelty, and oppression are to the simplest intelligence all bad; kindliness and loving conduct all good. The mother to her nursling has a good or tender heart; the same mother to any one who would injure her nursling a

¹ Matt. v. 43-48.

bad or hard heart. The warrior has a kind or good heart to his tribe, a hard or bad heart to the enemies of his tribe. In this sense no one will deny that humanity clearly distinguishes tenderness and hardness of heart; but there has never been an organised community where this distinction has been held to coincide with the distinction between right and wrong, though our Lord insists that it is so. In the sense indicated above, badness of heart to the enemy and the injurious has been everywhere held to be as desirable as goodness of heart to the friendly and the innocent. Good-heartedness, when not strictly limited, is inconvenient to every community man has yet organised; it has often been regarded as a vice, always as a source of blindness. At our highest point of civilisation we have regarded tender-heartedness as the purest virtue only when cultivated by, and under regulation of, reason. We have never regarded it as a source of divine light, and set reason to worship it.

The cause of this is clear. From ex-

amination of the world as it is, it is rational to conclude that the person, or the community, that followed the promptings of tender-heartedness, totally ignoring the promptings of hard-heartedness, would be swept from the face of the earth. The only consideration that could make all passive and active antagonisms appear iniquitous would be the belief that there was some Power—transcendent, immanent—behind the power of human tenderness, a Power that was able through that instrument to subdue the world to itself. Now, that seems to have been, if we could receive it, exactly what our Lord believed and taught.

It is unquestionably true that in the world as it is, neither man, woman, nor child can follow the promptings of the tender heart to the exclusion of the hard heart without suffering the loss of material advantage. Let the little boy or girl, even in the shelter of our

We do not make good-heartedness equivalent to goodness because we think it could not succeed in the world. Our Lord believed it to be the regulative virtue necessary to give all others survival value.

But tender-heartedness cannot prevail till our present customs of thought are destroyed.

best primary school, try it, and we know the result. Let the house-mother in her cottage try it; if she does not limit the service she might give to her sick neighbour, her own house is not clean; if she does not limit her gifts to the starving orphan, she cannot lay by for her own children. And how true this is for the bread-winner of the household we all know. What is true for individuals is also true for any class in the community. The Church does not allow her property to be encroached upon without showing the spirit of warfare; if she did she would lose it, and the present Church prefers warfare to loss. The nation among other nations will strike back, no matter how terrible the results for humanity. In the world as it is, the loss of all material welfare and life itself may always, and often must be, the first result of tender-heartedness in which there is no variableness or shadow of turning: but that was just what Jesus foretold.

Before the life of love can flourish in a sensible and material way, this world of

our present social systems, and the lust thereof, and its conception of God, must pass away, and a new earth and a new conception of God must come in its stead ; and this can only be done by the power of God. This is part of the Christian faith. If we believe that love in the simple and primitive sense, and in every higher development, is the fulfilling of the law, we are bound to believe in the catastrophe which is called "the end of this world-order," whatever be its time or its method. It was this belief in the destruction of evil institutions that made early Christianity so fearless and so practical.

We shrink from this belief. Yet I think we dare no longer reject the truth that goodness depends, not on the number and strength of other virtues, but upon the regulative insight of loving-kindness ; because it is only by grasping this essential conception of the Christian ethic that we may avoid in the future that compromise with moral evil that has blighted and deadened our past.

CHAPTER V

THE CHRISTIAN REVELATION

WE all recognise—have always recognised—that our Lord's vision of God's character

The Church has always formally recognised that God is love. showed God as more merciful, more loving, than men had formerly dared to suppose. But wherein was the God and Father

of our Lord Jesus Christ thus more merciful and more loving? "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth

Jesus made this appear more true than it before appeared by teaching that God is kind to the wicked. them that reverence Him"; that had long been a truism; but Jesus said that God pitied those who did not reverence Him. According to Him, God is kind to the unthankful and the evil; and this impartial kindness to good and evil men is the Divine attribute

held up for human imitation when men are bidden to show love to enemies, kindness to the unkind, and trustful confidence that God will bless wrong-doers even when we seem able to do them little good.

What, then, is the limit of God's patience with wrong-doers? At what point does He cease to be kind to evil men and miserably destroy them—hurl them into Gehenna or pour down fire and brimstone upon their cities?

We have been trained to believe that our Lord's use of such phrases But we retain belief in a latent wrath of God. shows that, although God is ready to forgive for a time, there comes an hour when His wrath, always latent, becomes active.

If that be true, perfect love could never cast out fear. The man who strives to love God perfectly can never be If wrath be latent in God no light-hearted joy is possible, no serenity of universal love. unconcerned for his fellows; and only an unconcerned and selfish man could fail to fear so terrible a calamity to any of his fellow-beings as that they should become the

objects of Divine wrath. The first traditions of this Divine wrath come to us from far centuries when the burden was less overpowering because men believed in a God of partial power—one among many powers—whose watchfulness might be evaded. In our Lord's day the universe, though it was not so large as ours, still was vast ; and the omnipotent Power that ruled it, who watched every sparrow and counted the hairs of every head, was a Being the risk of whose wrath would be too terrible to contemplate with intelligence. To-day, when we think of the Power, omnipotent and omnipresent, that sustains and guides the vast universe we now know, and conceive that Power as turning with wrath toward any of us, excluding us from His presence and care and blessing, we are right in judging that it is only our callousness and lack of imaginative power that calms our terror.

If we go back to our Lord's serene confidence in the kindness of the Father we shall find that this conception of Divine

wrath latent toward the unrepentant is not compatible with it. Consider

the scene with the little children.

"Then He took them in His arms and blessed them lovingly, one by one."¹ Remember that

But our Lord
taught and
exemplified
serene love to
all men, and
joy in God.

He did not save souls by magic, nor take their freedom from them--the freedom of man to do good or evil is his most insistent, all-underlying doctrine. Now, if each of these children was liable to incur the wrath of God and His destructive punishments, Jesus could have had no glad serenity in His heart when He caressed them. And the same applies to all the surging crowds of humanity about Him, whom He loved as a father loves sons and daughters, whom He loved as no other man has loved.

Again, the history of our human theories of punishment shows that the conscience of Christendom has gradually turned from the belief that punishment ought to be wrathful to the conviction

¹ Mark x. 13, Weymouth's translation, and see note.

that it is only justifiable on the ground that it is good for the sinner. Mr.

The Moberley, in his very able summary of the ethics of punishment,¹ finds that it has only a low moral value; that is, taken in connection with other moral influences it is in many cases required to start the criminal on the upward path, but without other moral influences it can only suggest, not accomplish, reformation. "The true object of punishment," he says, "so far as the person punished is concerned, is to awaken in him such a realisation of the true meaning of his wrong-doing as may induce him to repudiate it and to change his ways." But, long ago, vindictive or wrathful punishment was considered the supreme moral agency. Thus, in the history of human ideas we see a tendency of thought which we believe to be in the right direction: has it arrived at the goal of final truth on this matter? Must we

The
conscience of
Christendom
is turning
from wrath
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and human
punishment
to-day is
considered
justifiable
only when
purgative.

¹ *Foundations*, "Essay on the Atonement," p. 295.

not look for clearer truth where this line of tendency points?

Again, we may observe a steady march of thought, away from the fatalism which regards material evils as blessings in disguise, toward the reforming purposefulness which regards them as obstructions to God's will, mountains which are to be laid low, and ravines which have to be filled up, to make straight the way of the Divine righteousness. Here is another tendency which we believe to be in the right direction; let us ask if it too has reached the final goal of truth.

If we see Christian thought tending in one direction through many centuries, are we not bound to believe that the spirit of Christ, which upholds and inspires His servants even in spite of their opposition and foolishness, is telling us to look in that direction for the clearer realisation of His truth? Is it not a true estimate

We observe a steady advance in Christian thought to the position that material evils are opposed to the will of God.

We despise religious authority if we do not look for further advance in directions in which the Church has thus far travelled.

and right use of authority which leads us to look for truth in the direction in which a progressive revelation is pointing?

If, then, a suspicion has entered our minds as to the validity of all this belief in the desirable nature of moral wrath and its supreme educative value, let us ask ourselves again what was the new thing—

Let us ask again, what was the new revelation of God brought by our Lord? what was the main thing—that our Lord taught us about the great central truth which, like a dazzling light, shone out, and is still shining, in a misty darkness that does not readily comprehend and therefore pass away before it? What was the great idea that transfigured His humanity, and began to be, and has ever since been, the power of God unto human salvation?

It is, I think, unquestionable that a human life of whole-hearted, serene delight in God, whole-hearted, serene devotion to the interests of men, a life of such tender-heartedness that the smallest fraction of the world's suffering and loss (typified by

the fall of a tiny bird or the loss of one human hair), is regarded as of moment to the Divine Love, and therefore to human love—such a life could not possibly be lived except in the belief that in the Divine nature there is no latent wrath and in the Divine activity no infliction of suffering. We do not gather that Jesus regarded suffering as any more God's will than the state of moral evil into which we are born.

No latent
wrath in the
Divine
nature; no
infliction of
suffering in
the Divine
activity.

Now, we often hear a bitter cry from the lips of those who think that belief in God's wrath, and in man's need to fear God, are essential elements of true religion—as if all adequate sense of sin, all adequate hatred of sin, all virile effort toward good, depended upon these beliefs. I think that, as a mere matter of fact, it may be seen in the past and in the world around us that in proportion as men have minimised these beliefs they

But it does
not follow
that wrath
and punish-
ment are
not in the
universe,
and to be
reckoned
with, just as
sin exists
and is to be
reckoned
with.

have warred more and more valiantly against sin and all its concomitant evils; but that is not our present point. It is sufficient to say that wrath and fear and punishment are in the world, in our universe, as we know it, just as sin is; until all evils cease they cannot be got rid of. If we admit that sin exists and follows its own laws in opposition to the will of God, we have no reason to affirm that wrath and punishment are in harmony with His will. The fact of their existence, and the moral of their existence, is insisted upon by our Lord and by every true teacher of righteousness who has followed Him in upholding the doctrine that only love and good are infinite, eternal, and omnipotent.

Our Lord insists constantly on the certain coming of judgment, with its consequent destruction of evil-doing. In His language punishment is destructive; His metaphors do not suggest a process of purgation. Gehenna was not refining; escape from

Our Lord
insists on
the coming
judgment.

punishment was set forth as a duty. Punishment—the destructive result of sin—was conceived as destroying the soul's accretions, nullifying its gains; and such results certainly do not, in our Lord's teaching, end with the incident of death. All His language was parabolic or allegorical: He says again and again that He means us to go away and think about His figures of speech, and form the best estimate we can of what He means. Those who are not willing to think and form this estimate are said to have ears that do not hear and eyes that do not see. It is impossible for any one to look upon the world and not perceive that every thought, every feeling, every action, tends to some other thought, feeling, or action, and that certain lines of thought tend to certain consequences and other lines to other consequences. We are confused by the endless complexity, but, as we have already seen, our Lord represented the whole complexity of human life as divided into kingdoms of good and evil; He depicted a good power working in what

was good and an evil force acting in what was evil; to Him the good force was supreme and permanent and bound to cast out the other; it was the other force that was destructive.

"Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon thee": here is a course of action which, He says, will produce a punitive result, but it is quite certain that He did not regard this punishment as from God, because He certainly did not regard the diseases He cured as originating in the power of good, any more than He regards them as salutary and purgative. For Him they are part of that inevitable result of continuing in evil, and are the work of the destructive force which He held to be in opposition to supreme and permanent Power.

The proof of this is that He appeals to His healing of disease to show that He was certainly the accredited agent of the supreme Power. His exorcisms and His healings were proof that the Kingdom of the Supreme was set up upon earth; and that it was working to over-

But only
good actions
and good
constructive
results are
of God.

throw the Kingdom of evil which opposed it.

Our Lord seems to have seen so clearly this division of human activities into good and evil, and their results as respectively constructive or destructive, that He pictures Himself as standing between the good and the evil in humanity and announcing to them the inevitable results of their conduct. But this force of destruction which He picturesquely calls "Satan" or "the prince of this world," which He identifies with all the diabolic element in the spirits of wrathful and vicious men, living and dead—this destructive force is no unknown, romantic power attacking from without; it is the very activity of wrong-doing itself. The whole working of wrong from beginning to end is self-destructive. The activities of the individual soul are its manifestation in body and deed, in thought and feeling and will; and these activities of wrong torture and destroy themselves. There is no escape but in good activity. Good is never

Evil actions
and their
resulting
punishments
are wholly
evil.

passive ; it casts out evil simply by being good. Good—the activity of God's will—is the supreme and permanent Power. Good activity, then, is self-constructive from the very beginning. The Judgment is any event which shows up the real nature of good and evil activities ; for men are so bound together in the bundle of life, and so much misled by corporate hallucinations, that this nature is not always manifest. Here, in our Lord's poetic picture of the Kingdoms of Satan and of God, is a conception of life, a clarifying vision of the whole pageant of life, a clue to the very heart of God, which in truth casts out fear, which is in harmony with serene and joyful zeal for the salvation of the indestructible human spirit. There is, within us and without us, spiritual wrath, but it is not God's wrath ; it is the evil activity of humanity. There is, within us and without us, terrible punishment—a thing to fear—but it is not of God's infliction, except in the sense in which wrong-doing, into which we are all born, is of His infliction.

All power is of God, but for the sake of giving freedom to an indestructible spiritual creation He lends His power to activities which are self-destructive, just as to those which are self-constructive. Our Lord's reverence for the freedom

For the sake of spiritual freedom God lends His power to self-destructive evil.

of humanity is one of the most remarkable traits in His character and teaching. Man is free to choose, splendidly free. Man must therefore be free to create for himself forms and environments, and free to destroy these, and by this to come at last, if he will not come at first, into harmony with the constructive Power.

There is no attempt in the Gospel to solve the problem of the finite and the infinite. It is there: two con-ceptions which seem to us to be mutually exclusive exist together; but the infinite and eternal is the good, and the good is love, working out into beauty and joy and health; while the finite is evil, working out into wrath and ugliness and pain and disease

No attempt in the Gospel to solve the problem of finite and infinite; but good is infinite, evil finite.

and sin and misery of all sorts. The great central idea in our Lord's life was that there is no wrath, no punishment, nothing destructive, nothing to fear, in the Infinite.

Though we are not discussing the question how evil came about, we must not

fail to observe that in the stream of humanity it is not he who sins most who suffers most, nor he who commits most wickedness who is most guilty; for sin

To dissociate
sin from
suffering does
nothing to
solve the
problem of
evil.

deadens feeling and moral sense, and goodness quickens both—and that for generations. On all sides of us we can see that moral evil produces physical evil, which, instead of being purgative, again reacts to produce moral evil, because men are largely made by their environment. We may not be able to reconcile all this with God's goodness and power, but we do not make the reconciliation one whit easier, we do not come one hair's breadth nearer to understanding the problem, by making God more responsible for the suffering than for the sin.

We cannot, however, believe in God at all without believing that, having set His creation free to make wrong choices, the suffering that in the very constitution of things He linked to the wrong choices is educative as well as destructive ; because it incites to the escape into communion with God which is the only education ; and also because God's creatures in the grip of sin and suffering must every moment be the objects of His providential care, whether they are seeking escape or not. But all this is very different from saying that suffering is God's will. The wrong choice and the destructive consequence and the pain are all equally against His will ; and at every moment there is a way of escape by the recognition of the truth that evil activity is finite, temporal, and comparatively impotent, and that good activity is omnipotent, infinite, and eternal.

We can approach our Lord's vision of the Kingdom of Satan in another way.

Escape from
sin and
suffering
comes in
the realisa-
tion that the
goodness of
God is
omnipotent.

We see clearly that it is God's will that the fortunes of every member of the race should be inseparably bound up with the race, that any deviation from the wholesome and right should be a painful, disintegrating, corporate process, ending, if it be not checked, in the destruction of all the parts affected. We see this now, although we have long muddled matters by looking at the process with our petty, individual eyes, and calling certain forms of deviation from the wholesome sinful, while we call other forms saintly. As a matter of fact, there is no sin, there is no wrong, no suffering, that is not "common to men." We go wrong collectively in hundreds of thousands; we suffer collectively in hundreds of thousands; and collective suffering is provocative of further wrong-doing. This collective life belongs to the constitution of creation as we know it; for this racial unity the Creator is responsible. But faith has long ago assumed that our collective wrong was not His will, and that in giving His

creatures freedom, and thus risking the wrong, He had an end in view so glorious that it justified the cost. I am not arguing to vindicate this faith; it is on this faith that I take my stand. We cannot dissociate any part of the whole painful disintegrating process. The suffering is just as much God's will as the wrong-doing, and no more. The consequence or punishment is just as abhorrent to Him as the cause. Faith has long ago perceived that God is standing as Eternal Saviour, ceaselessly offering to every individual soul a way of escape from the wrong-doing by the realisation of His immanent omnipotence. Faith must now root itself in the conviction that the offer of salvation is an offer of escape from the whole disintegrating process, from all the many forms of infirmity and ineptitude and pain and weakness by which we are enslaved, and the escape is by the realisation of the same immanent omnipotence of God. Further, faith has

Christian
faith must
realise more
completely
all that is
involved in
our Lord's
doctrine of
the two
Kingdoms.

long ago realised that this ceaseless offer of salvation to the individual soul is accompanied by the Divine sympathy and cherishing care; faith must now rise to the conviction that because every soul thus lies in the bosom of God there is no rightness, no painlessness, that is not collective. There is no salvation of a member that does not derive from the whole body, just as there is no perdition of a member that does not derive from the whole body. There is in the whole the push and *elan* of what we call "life," or "nature" in the good sense of that word, or "grace"; there is in the whole the ferment of infectious evil, moral, intellectual, physical; and the leap of every individual soul to the light not only draws from what is good in the whole, but by its leap draws the current of life more vitally through the whole. And, further, the activities of the enlightened soul are all occupied with the whole; the only salvation is to be saving, the only escape is to be rescuing; the only health is to be healing.

Again, faith has long taken her stand upon the conviction that God suffers in the suffering of man—"in all their afflictions He was afflicted." This is a truism of Christian devotion although little realised; but the implication has not always been accepted that God suffers in man's sin, that is, He suffers His own immanent power in man to be used to disintegrate His own creation. To the worst of sinners He is "nearer than breath," closer than hands and feet." It is this that throws into clear relief what may be called the insanity of wrong-doing.

God suffers
patiently in
man's wrong-
doing as in
his pain,
mental and
physical.

This conviction that God lends His own power to the wrong-doer, lends Himself, as it were, to the wrong-doing, must make it clear that it is strong grief, not anger, that God feels toward the sinner; grief as of a mother who sees her first-born son commit some insane atrocity against the infant darling of her heart. But God's creature is far nearer and dearer to God than son to a mother.

I think we see this in the life of our Lord, although the report of His emotions

has come to us through men soaked in the idea that moral wrath was half of human virtue and half of God. We must remember too that the first-hand observers and reporters of our

Lord's emotions had little power of analysis, and that they had not precise nomenclature for emotions shading into one another. When in a passion of grief at the insane blunders and self-destructive course of His opponents He told them truths that His profound insight revealed of character, of the whence and the whither of their actions, how liable would His disciples be to call His emotion anger, themselves feeling angry on His behalf ! and yet, in spite of all this, the predominating note of all we hear of His attitude toward sin is strong suffering and grief. He never ceased to desire for all whom He upbraided that forgiveness which is the cure for moral insanity, the healing of all that is morbid and abnormal.

The present inward heaven of the heart, which was the divine gift our Lord offered to men, is in harmony with the emotion of strong grief at sin and the attribution of that grief to God. If the object of sorrow be not worthy it is not grief men feel but offence or contempt; these are in harmony with anger, but grief is in harmony with love. Grief, strong and determined, is all that is useful in the complex state that we have called righteous anger.

Strong grief is all that is useful in the state of emotion we have called righteous anger.

In reviewing the variance between what has been here advanced and our traditional or orthodox interpretation of the mind of Christ, ought we not to ask ourselves,

First: whether in reading the finest passages of the Hebrew prophets, in allowing our hearts to be stirred by the splendid utterance they often give to the love of God, we sufficiently realise, when they characterise God as other than kind, how far into the warp and woof of their minds was woven

Different ways in which human limitation may have coloured our traditional interpretation of the mind of Christ.

a law and a conception of the Divine Law-giver that had their source in human hard-heartedness.

Second : how far our whole notion of the attitude and character of our Lord has been influenced by the belief that the hardness of the Mosaic law was of Divine origin, and that, therefore, the character of Jesus Christ must in some way be in harmony with it, so that the severity and jealousy and austerity of Jehovah must somewhere be found within Jesus Christ and within His conception of the Divine Father.

Third : whether we sufficiently realise the influence of older religious ideas upon the writers whose task was to give their first interpretation of the character and teaching of Jesus Christ to us. In reading such expressions as St. Paul uses in his polemic against the first and Judaic interpretation of Christianity, or such phrases of Christian apocalyptic as "the wrath of the Lamb," have we any reason to suppose they throw a pure light upon the mind of Christ ?

Finally: in our renewed effort to interpret the Gospel story we must also remember that whenever our Lord is reported as being "moved with anger," it was when He dealt with men who were godly, conscientious, and loyal to their own idea of righteousness, while they were rejecting the simple doctrine of the free love of God, with all its concrete implications. For our Lord it was only the tender heart that was a good heart. The law that legalised hardness of heart had trained the piety of His nation to the very estimate of virtue which He unsparingly denounced.

Do we think that if God turn not the fire of wrath toward the sinner He is no moral Governor of the world? Do we think if "wrathful indignation" is taken out of our list of virtues and set in our list of vices, we shall cease to have any moral backbone, and that sin, public and private, will become more rampant? Let us realise

If we think
our moral
wrath is
needed to
purify
society
us remember
how recently
we thought
the massacre
of heretics
necessary.

that it is only a short time since decimating religious wars were the commonplace of religious enthusiasm! Let us remember that only the day before yesterday our friend Calvin, in righteous zeal, thought it impracticable to defend the faith without burning heretics! Let us think how recently our friend Laud, consumed with the fire of what he thought to be righteousness, cropped the ears of non-conformists, and sent men and women—old men and feeble women and little children—wandering month after month in a life of terror, homeless over the bleak Scotch hills!

Do we suppose that because reason and love have taught us much we have reached the final goal of moral wrath or so-called "righteous indignation," or that when that goal of ill is reached the good that comes of it will be anything else than the opening of the eyes of the world to see how impotent it is for good, how potent for evil? This righteous indignation that we cherish is the very fire whose flame, breaking out,

has tortured every heretic and lit the beacon-fire of every war. It is loving-kindness that alone is eternal, infinite, and omnipotent, and the Christ, who is as grieved in Judas as He is glad in the beloved disciple, offers in His submission to the betrayal of Judas the only atonement strong enough to turn the insane disloyalty of humanity into loyal harmony with Himself.

The cross teaches us that God's love is unwavering and omnipotent.

CHAPTER VI

THE NEW EARTH

ST. PAUL describes God as "able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us." We can all ask for, or think of, a very much better experience than we have ever known ; man can desire a better social future than the past he has lived through ; that is the essential difference between the man and the brute.

The power
to seek for
something
better than
he has
known
divides man
from the
brutes.

If we look back to the earliest philosophies of the world of which we have any record, we may see this distinction struggling to affirm itself. It is true that we first get the conception of the stream of events flowing for ever in a

great circle; and in this idea—which we echo when we say “history repeats itself”—there is no room for the thought of secular purpose. We find the human mind, apparently unsatisfied with this, first affirming its faith in some future that shall not be a repetition of the past by the belief that certain souls, when they have attained, are thrown off from this circling wheel, as it were, at a tangent and landed in some permanently better condition.

But among ancient religious beliefs two emerge—and, according to Professor Söderblom, two only—in which this idea of an endless repetition of events is altogether rejected—the Persian and the Hebrew.

Both these religions represent the stream of events as flowing from a beginning toward a goal, as embodying the purpose of a purposeful God. It is only in the development of this conception that the human consciousness has

But in many early philosophies Time is an endless circle and history an endless repetition, from which certain individuals only can escape into some Nirvana.

The more virile tradition of Persians and Hebrews represents history as having a purpose and a goal.

become most virile, developing harmoniously will, feeling, and reason. The ancient race that grasped it most sturdily was the Hebrew.

As a matter of fact, neither the one conception nor the other can be anything but mysterious to the human mind. When we try to apply our reason to the whence and the whither of the cosmos, to the analysis of time and change, reason and imagination fail. But if neither is more intelligible than the other, that which looks forward to a consummation appears to correspond more with the other powers of developed manhood. Both feeling and will demand that life as we know it shall have a consummation; both feeling and will demand that human history as we know it shall work toward that consummation. This was the great strength of the Hebrew prophet: God had a purpose in history; it was a purpose that man could partly understand; it was a purpose that man, if he would, could wholly co-operate with; it was in the co-operation

of man and God that the purpose was to be accomplished.

If there be a Divine purpose in history, insight into the meaning and survival value of events is the same thing as foresight into the result of those events. Dr. Edward Caird said that with the Hebrew prophets insight was foresight.

If there be purpose in history, insight into survival values must be foresight.

But it is not alone of the Hebrew prophet that this is true; the man who can look about him to-day, and see with penetrating eye those elements in the life of his community which have survival value, can, if there be purpose in history, sketch the future. The imagery of his sketch may be crude, as in Jewish prophecy, but just in so far as his insight is true, his vision of future events will symbolise truth. The crudeness of the symbol will not alter the inner certainty that it sets forth.

In this stream of potent thought in which human history is regarded as tending toward a purpose of God, and man is looked upon as good or evil as he co-

operates, or fails to co-operate, with that purpose, we find what is called Jewish eschatology. The belief that God was going to bring the world to an end and create a new world, a belief cherished by so many pious souls at the Christian era, was no mere temporary fanatical delusion. It was a bit of hard racial thinking, as were previous stages of Hebrew thought.

Jewish prophecy and apocalyptic are stages of the racial thought in which history is regarded as governed by God's purpose.

We can see these stages reflected in the life of any earnest-minded and religious man who believes that God is good and the hearer of prayer. As a child he prays that all that he desires may come about, and expects that life about him will naturally blossom into perfection ; but he early finds blight in his garden, disappointment and persistent evil in his little world. That seems to represent the first stage of Hebrew thinking ; the promised land, the land flowing with milk and honey, was to be a natural life of unalloyed good ; but the expectation was disappointed.

The next stage of the earnest young life is warfare. The good youth attempts to combat evil conditions in offensive mood. He wants, in the name of God, to fight the bully, to bring authority to bear upon cowardice and idleness, to give largess to all the needy, to mend the world from the outside ; and again there is disappointment. Now, the Hebrew idea of attaining to political power and military prestige, and thus bringing the world to the worship of Jahweh, was just like this. It was the natural impulse of the racial mind in its growth. Jahweh was a God of battles and a God of punishments.

What, then, is the next stage ? The good and combative man finds himself defeated ; some little ill may have been remedied by his external methods, but the large result is defeat. Things are as bad, if not worse, than before. He is in a wretched minority. But still God must be good ; God must answer prayer. His next effort is to find some ritual, some course of personal devotion, some routine,

in which he may be sure that his prayers are heard and that he is inwardly and personally co-operating with God, and that therefore he can confidently look for God to put things right by some coercive miracle. The miracle will take the form that the imagination of his generation suggests. He may rest in dreams of the visible power of the Church, made swiftly universal and triumphant by the power of God ; or he may serenely suppose that at death another material existence or heaven will begin, in which his own faulty character and all surrounding conditions will be at once perfected. This is the last stage of thought that is untouched by the resurrection power of Christianity, and it is quite common in nominal Christendom to-day. It was in the phase of national thought corresponding with this that the Jewish apocalypses apparently were written. This apocalyptic thought was far from being a mere delusion. It was based upon the rock truth that God is good, and will fulfil the desire of His creatures. It was in part

a delusion, because it was also based upon the idea that the power of God was coercive. Hence its argument was that, because the Jews could not exercise visible power over men, they could not co-operate with God in the destruction of evil, in the institution of all good, except by such private and personal obedience to religious rules as would prevail upon Him to exercise His might in the destruction of His enemies, in the exaltation of His servants.

To regard apocalyptic thought as wholly dominated by fanatical nationalism is a mistake. Since the days of the second Isaiah the pious Jew in his highest hours had always transcended the idea of a merely national salvation. In the Pharisaic Messiah all nations of the earth were to be blessed. There is undoubtedly a very true place for the individual and the nation, as well as the whole race, in any sane conception of God's salvation, because the argument on which faith in a salvation is based is always that God cannot fail the soul that seeks Him,

Jewish
apocalyptic
transcended
nationalism.

the nation that seeks Him. To say that the human foible of a narrow and selfish nationalism entered largely into the apocalyptic view is only to say that the vision was mirrored in human imaginations and partook of human weakness.

It is also a mistake to regard apocalyptic thought as either this-worldly or other-worldly. The Iraman con-

It also
transcended
the earthly
vision while
including it.

ception of an immortal life for the soul beyond death, and in some region other than earth, had come in and was diffused by the mystery religions through Hellenic civilisation. This conception of immortality was struggling with the Semetic idea of a glorified earth; and the Messianic salvation included both. The apocalyptic vision, although it soars and ascends, like the lark, between the heavens above and its home on the earth, is self-consistent in its rejection of the evils of earth; cruelty and lust, pride and oppression, anguish and want, are to vanish at the touch of God; the perpetrators of evil are to be crushed and a new

social righteousness is to arise, and that social righteousness is bodied forth in ideal earthly conditions.

Its virility lay in this refusal to acquiesce in evil earthly conditions, in this refusal to credit God with acquiescence in earthly evils, and in the civic nature of its ideal. Its folly lay in the idea that God's way of dealing with the world was a way of superimposed force.

The virility of Jewish apocalyptic thought lay in its refusal to acquiesce in earthly evil, and in its conception of a social and civic salvation. Its folly lay in its thought of God's dealing as coercive.

Now if the first Christian contribution to religious thought in the apocalyptic stage had been, as so many affirm, to emphasise the merely spiritual side of God's salvation, to point out that that salvation consisted only in the education of the human spirit to dwell in timeless and spaceless conditions, the only consistent Christians would have been the hermits, the pillar saints, the cloistered monastics. There is no consistency in doing works of benevolence

If the Christian contribution has been to emphasise a spiritual, at the cost of a corporate earthly, salvation, the pillar saints would have been consistent Christians.

unless we believe God is working for the world's material salvation. If God does not intend to relieve men on earth from want and fear, sickness and the possession of devils,

how can man have the single eye, the undivided aim, the imper-
There is no consistency or peace of mind in alleviating earthly conditions if God is not working for an earthly salvation.
 turbed mind, in attempting these tasks? He is, at best, attempting to make bricks without straw, to make ropes of sand. If he is taught to attempt these tasks merely for the improvement of his own character and as an example for others, he is like the poor wretches who, to earn a night's shelter in some workhouse, are made to carry a pile of useless stones from one side of a yard to another. There is in the temporary alleviation of ineradicable calamities no rest for the soul, no kind and easy adjustment of the yoke to the shoulders that must carry the burden; for it is man's nature to work comfortably only when he feels that he is accomplishing something worth while, when everything he does tends to some worthy end.

The doctrine of the co-operation of God for the salvation of the earth had been the strength of the Jewish prophets, and our Lord takes up this prophetic message. He depicts all things as divided into two kingdoms—all things abnormal and evil in the kingdom that shall pass away; all things normal and good in the Kingdom of God which shall speedily triumph. Our Lord's message is couched in splendid poetic imagery; and every action recorded of Him is a parable, proclaiming the same division of these two kingdoms, demanding loyalty to the one, repudiation of the other. And while both kingdoms include earth they are greater, extending over a life beyond earth. The Kingdom of God extends over all the universe and through all time and eternity. Visualised as space, earth is a part of it; visualised as time, each earthly life is a part of it. That is why a triumph of the Kingdom of Heaven implies the restoration of earth. Of the kingdom of evil the same may be said;

In splendid poetic imagery our Lord depicts the universe as divided into two kingdoms. This earth is a part of their battle-ground.

that is why the rout of every evil thing upon earth is necessary to the complete dominion of God.

It was not by the external magical force conceived of in the apocalyptic vision that our Lord decided this was to be brought about, but by the internal creative power of human benevolence and faith linked up to God.¹

We have little need to look down upon the men of faith who dreamed the apocalyptic visions of our Lord's day. In their eyes was the mote, in ours the beam, for we are not as far on as they in our general thought to-day. All down the twenty Christian ages left behind us we see that a large proportion of Our traditional Christianity has faced the future with drawn sword, or the withdrawn life of resignation. devotional prayer and action has been inspired by the belief that the world is to be improved by human swords and batons used as God's

¹ It is possible to believe this to be true, while admitting that our Lord's mental imagery of the earthly future must have borne the stamp of His age. Compare paper on "Early Christian Eschatology" by E. von Dobschütz in *Transactions of the Third International Congress of Religions*, vol. ii. p. 316.

instruments, or by magical transformation compelled in answer to the wailing of cloistered intercessors. While this is no advance on the apocalyptic belief in external force, it is behind apocalyptic insight in tolerating evils that the Jewish seers pronounced destructible, and that ought to have been destroyed.

We have worshipped an idol, an imagination of God as instigator of all the disasters, warfare, and want, and consequent calamities, of earth. Out of this idolatry of a God the instigator of our diseases and misfortunes, out of this fatalistic resignation to evil, has sprung our prevalent belief that salvation is to be looked for only beyond the grave; and that a negative morality, tinged with a little altruism and a little repetition of creeds, will fit men for it.

Do we not believe in the mission of the Christ on earth? Do we not believe that the Kingdom of God can come, and His will be done, on earth? It was

The offer
of salvation
depends on a
corporate
repudiation
of all wrong,
a corporate
expectation of
the perfect
good.

just this that our Lord taught to be saving faith. His offer of salvation was conditioned; it depended on a corporate repentance from all acquiescence in evil, a joyous corporate expectation of the perfect good.

It is this joyous expectation that ought to be embodied in all our creeds. It is this faith that the Kingdom of Love is at hand that we should be reciting at all our formal worship. It is by this faith, and by this faith alone, that we can accept the full salvation of our Lord Jesus Christ which has been so often rejected.

The revelation of the Gospel, if we judge of it by its main drift and most salient characteristics, was certainly to declare God's intention of bringing about a renovated earth—to proclaim that it was to come, not by coercion, but by the power of love; not by God without man, but by God within man, who is able

We can only
accept the
salvation of
Christ by
making this
our creed.

Summary:
The only
salvation
is a social
salvation.

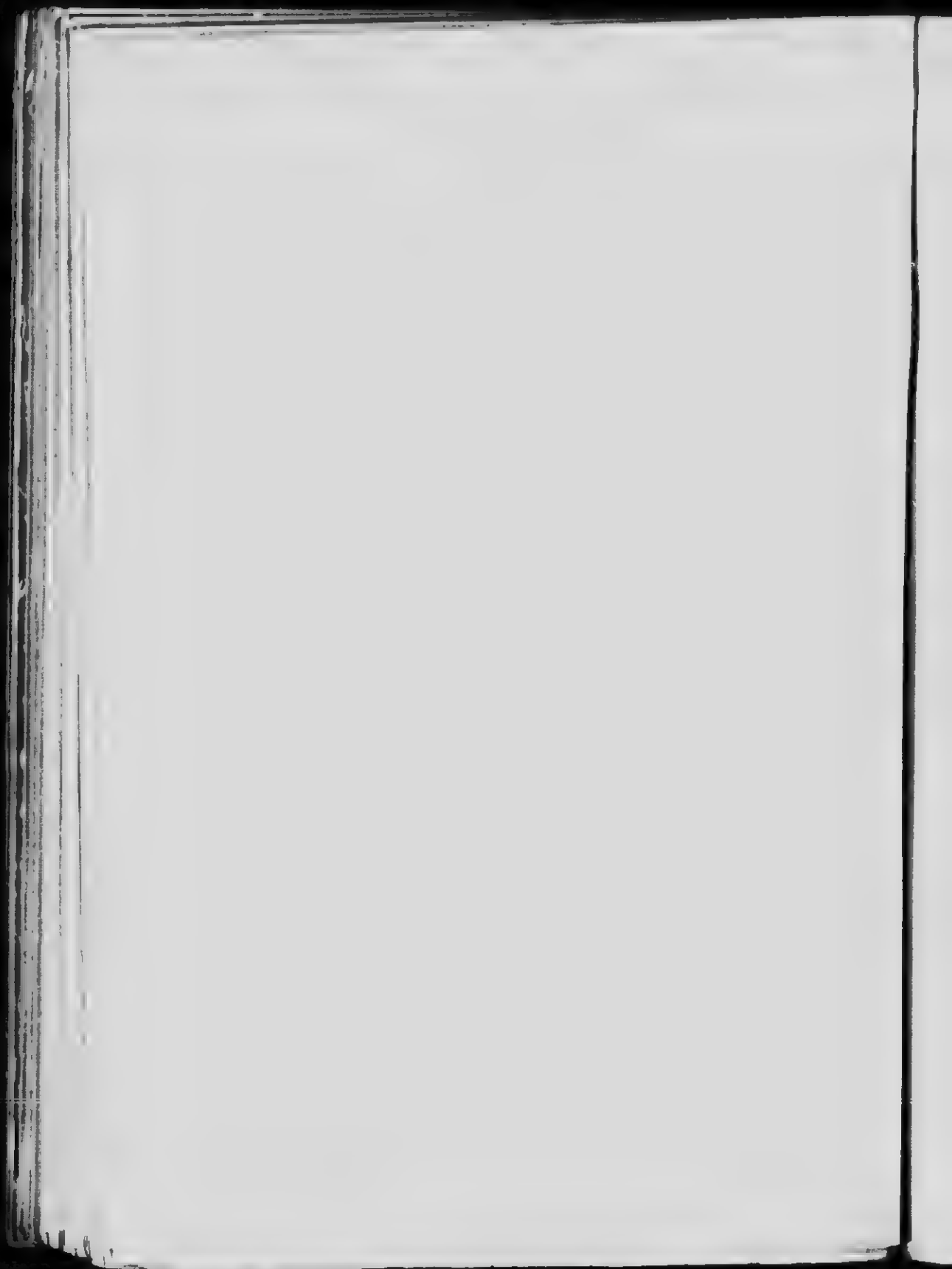
To accomplish all—more than all things,
Far transcending all our prayers, all our imagin-
ings,

To an extent whose measure is that mighty
impulse which thrills us through.¹

Loving-kindness springs naturally from
this realisation of God's love and power ;
and the strength of man's corporate impulse
of faith and loving-kindness is the measure
of God's power on earth.

¹ Ephesians iii. 20, Way's translation.

BOOK II
THE CITY OF DESTRUCTION



CHAPTER VII

THE PENAL SYSTEM : I.

It would certainly appear that the repentance and the hope required of any one who would be a humble follower of our Lord Jesus Christ involves the turning away at heart from what is seen to be social evil, and the turning of the heart toward what is seen to be social good, regardless of what would appear to be the impossibility of the good. The good is to be brought about by the power of God. God is a spirit; and the spirit of man—his will, his intellect, his feeling—must turn in the direction God would work before God Himself can work. I do not here speak merely of outward action; there are matters in which it is

The spirit of
man is the
sword of God.

impossible for the individual to act outwardly, because individual action would be futile or worse than futile and there is no corporate action in which he can join. It is the inward repudiation of the wrong, the inward turning with the prayer of faith to something better, that is the first and decisive duty. "As a man thinketh in his heart so is he." The faith of our Lord Jesus Christ requires that we believe that what is good will in some way shortly be realised, will be realised through the corporate action of determined and wholly benevolent men; and the attitude of heart that looks for the Spirit of God moving in such corporate human action, and is ready to leap forward and join in it, is the attitude of the servant who looks for his lord's coming.

The prior duty of every Christian is to consider what, with our present light, we are forced to judge evil in our institutions.

If this faith of personal responsibility for the approach of the reign of God be used as a test-tube in which to examine the

common stuff of our opinions, we shall discover many of our favourite assumptions to be false.

One initial confusion lies in a quasi-scientific, quasi-religious assumption, supposed to be derived from the past history of our planet and of our race—the assumption that without hostile activities no progress, biological or social, could have been made. Most of us are willing to admit that the changes we can trace in biological evolution give evidence of progress from lower to higher, and that the human race has made intellectual and moral progress—progress from worse to better—from the time of its primitive beginnings until now. This progress has actually been made in conditions of selfishness, cruelty, servility, cunning, and oppression; all these have contributed to the present result quite as much as the generosity, the tenderness, the independence, the honesty, and the benevolence with which they have been mixed. This undoubted fact we

The progress
we have
made is no
proof that
we are what
we ought
to be.

often see confused with the assumption that evil conditions contribute to progress. There is not the slightest proof that life on this globe, including humanity, could not have developed differently, and much better. The present result is quite as bad as it is good. That we are now comparatively decent and clever while at a not very far-distant time we were both indecent and dull, can prove to the scientific theist only that God was able to bring a certain amount of good out of evil, or, as the old writer sang, "Man's wrath shall praise thee, and the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain." It does not follow that wrath was necessary to make man what he ultimately ought to be ; that remains to be proved.

Let us realise that if our religious morality depend upon the belief that God lends created beings power to do wrong while He also gives them the power to do right, we must apply this to the past as well as to the present. If, with our Lord, we are ready to admit that even the best laws and institutions of the past were

due rather to hardness than to goodness of heart, we shall be much less likely to assume that wrath and violence are necessary now and will abide with us. The Christian must demand the clearest evidence, first, that wrath and oppression were endorsed by our Lord as necessary in His time, and, secondly, that they are useful now, before he allows himself to acquiesce in the institutions in which they are embodied.

We need to ascertain that oppression is Christ-like and useful before we acquiesce in it.

Perhaps the one of these institutions that lies nearest to our door is our penal system. The undoubted fact that there is very much in our Lord's recorded words, very much in the attitude of mind that underlies His parables, that shows that He regarded all evil as bringing on itself certain destruction,² does not contradict His principle that man must not coerce his

Jesus commands that culprits be forgiven.

¹ Our Lord's crusade against traditional morality implies this. See note A.

² Matt. vii. 26-27; Luke vi. 49; Matt. xxi. 41-44; Mark xii. 9-11; Luke xx. 16-18; Matt. xxii. 11-13, etc.

brother sinner.¹ On the other side it is urged that the evident utility of a penal system shows that our Lord must have endorsed it, and that His condemnation of the traditional penal code of His day was for individual and inward application, rather than applicable to corporate and public action.

Before acquiescing in this latter assumption let us note three things : (1) That our Lord in proclaiming the advent of the Kingdom would necessarily be concerned to give principles of corporate action.

(2) That in His conception of a theocracy in which each man was, within himself, united to the King, receiving inward guidance and power—a conception implied in the doctrine of the indwelling Kingdom—there could be no distinction between individual and corporate morality ; in such a Kingdom individual morality must become corporate morality.

(3) That no other method than the penal method has ever been systematically tried

¹ Matt. v. 38-42, vii. 1 ; Luke vi. 29-30, 37.

for the reform of social offenders ; there has never been any sustained effort to deal with them exclusively by the method of corporate friendship ; so we have no evidence whatever that the penal method is the most effective.

The whole tone of our social and religious life is so feeble that we have no adequate idea of the positive upholding and re-creating power of friendship, human or divine. Our Lord's conception of the friendship of God for man involved a constant positive outflow of gifts and innervating influence as of a father to his dependent children. Forgiveness was thus no negative thing, as we too commonly conceive it, but the inrush of dower and power, the more potent because the flow had, as it were, been dammed up for the time by man's unreceptive attitude. "And his father ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him . . . and said, Bring forth quickly the best robe, and put it on him ; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes

We have not systematically tried the method of the best robe and the feast with our legal offenders.

on his feet : and bring the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat and make merry." We have never systematically tried the method of the best robe, and the ring, and the fatted calf with our legal criminals or social offenders.

Not long ago an incident occurred in my neighbourhood which perhaps came near to being the ideal exercise of corporate forgiveness. There was a poor drunken woman, morose and hard, who neglected her children until she and they became a nuisance and a disgrace to the whole village. At length she fell ill and was taken to a hospital ; and the children, starved and naked, were taken by kindly neighbours and, for the first time in their lives, properly cared for. In the hospital the woman, when visited by the parish priest, showed herself sullen and unresponsive. When she was about to return to her home her cottage was examined and found to be filthy and without the bare necessities of a decent life. An inspiration

An instance
of corporate
forgiveness.

of compassion came to the little community. The cottage was scrubbed, whitewashed and refurnished. When the poor woman returned to her transformed home and cared-for children she seemed, in her surprise, to become for the first time really human. An extraordinary change for the better came over her, and eighteen months after, when I last heard, she had not relapsed. and was acting the part of a responsible mother. But how very rarely is such a method tried in our Christian civilisation ! I do not remember ever hearing of another case where demerit was so little regarded, and where a community was moved to deal with a sinner in so divine a way.

If this woman had relapsed many times, if the same divine treatment had been applied again and again, would the benevolence of these neighbours have been ill-directed ? They would, at least, have brought her within nearer reach of the Christian salvation ; they would, at least, have been holding their own souls in the direct line of that salvation ; to them, at

least, when they claimed at the last to have worked in His name, He would not have to say—as to how many of us He will say —“I never knew you.”

Let us, in the next chapter, consider how far our present penal system can be justified.

NOTE

There exist certain reformatories for boys which suggest what form corporate forgiveness might take—*e.g.* the Boys' Farm, at Shawbridge, near Montreal, where the average boy-criminal is placed in circumstances in every way happier than he could have experienced apart from his conviction. This system has met with great success, and it remains for us to learn that men are but children of a larger growth.

CHAPTER VIII

THE PENAL SYSTEM : II.

LET us examine our present notions of retributive justice. Punishments may be divided into three classes—Three classes of punishment—domestic, social, and legal. Men have always punished their children in order to train them ; they have lynched, tarred and feathered, or ostracised, their neighbours when they were socially disagreeable to them ; and they have also tabulated certain offences for legal punishment.

A slight examination of even the slow progress of our faulty human history shows that severity of punishment is not the path of moral progress. Unquestionably, children ought to be trained ; society

ought to be kept wholesome ; and there must be a law to deal with offences the treatment of which cannot fitly be left to individual or mob caprice ; but does it follow that law must be penal ?

It is not so very long ago that punishment was supposed to be the chief factor in the training of children and in the preservation of moral and civic order ; but it has now become a truism with students of sociology that punishment is a very small factor in the influences that make for the training of either the child or the adult. It is often somewhat hastily supposed to be pure compassion that has operated to so modify punishments that a radical change in domestic and criminal usage has been effected, and a shallow cry against sentimentalism is raised. But although the growth of compassion has contributed to this change it is not the chief cause of it. Had punishment been found by experience to make bad men good, or bad children good, good people

The severity
of all punish-
ment has
been greatly
mollified
because
punishment
did not result
in goodness.

would not have yielded to compassion. Punishment did not attain its object ; it did not produce goodness ; it did not deter from crime. It was often used in connection with other influences which had good result ; mere punishment had many results, but they were not good.

Such records as we have of domestic and social life at a time when children by their parents, and apprentices by their masters, were beaten unsparingly for their faults, do not indicate that good training was a common result. Where good training resulted there is evidence of other influences at work. While then, unquestionably, youth requires training and untrained men are disagreeable and ineffective, fear of punishment does not guide the growing youth aright or make the grown man agreeable or effective. And this is so well understood as regards the young that the best educational systems of our day almost omit punishment as a moral factor, although the lay mind has not yet grasped

Our best
educational
systems
almost omit
punishment
as a moral
factor.

the significance of scientific conclusions in this matter.

If we go from the domestic and educational to the social field of observation, we shall find the same change taking place. The punishment here deemed appropriate is outlawry. In all history one per-

Outlawry is
our punish-
ment for
social
offences.

vading ideal of conduct has been that the good man cannot associate with the bad man, and the good woman should be even more exclusive in her companionships. The result of this ideal has been twofold—first, an external standard of social goodness has had to be set up, to which many with bad hearts could conform and many with good hearts would not conform ; and, secondly, the best persons in the world, when satisfied with an exclusive society, have deteriorated.

It was this moral ideal that of old time crystallised in caste. Caste would have appeared to be a very good system if it had worked ; but obviously it is not in harmony with the constitution of the uni-

The caste
system and
moral ex-
clusiveness
are failures.

verse because it does not work ; it does not produce the best type of men, physically, mentally, or morally. If, when England was in the making, men of this island had been separated into exclusive castes according to their nationality and religion—Briton, Saxon, Dane, Norman, etc.—what would have been the result ? Each caste would have suffered from the lack of new blood, new ideas, and new morals, which were necessary to true vitality and genuine progress.¹ And the dominant caste would have been the most exclusive and would have suffered most. We have a little of this among us, and we know well enough what it has come to ; we have object-lessons also in the East ; while in every farm-yard the farmer knows that pure-bred stock is not an end in itself, but is only useful for crossing. So much for the society that excludes ; but how with those excluded ? In times when one false step shut a girl out of respectable employment for life, was

¹ Cp. *Social Evolution and Political Theory*, by Prof. L. T. Hobhouse, chap. iii.

she more or less likely to reform than now when such helping hands are held out to her that her fate is much less forlorn? Our social annals prove that she was not less likely to fall, and was less likely to reform. And the same is true of other social offences. Diminutive stature and weak brains are the physical result of a too exclusive mating; and the twofold result of moral or religious separateness has always been, a vast mistake regarding the character of goodness and the further degradation of sinners. None can now doubt the excellent intention of the ancient Pharisee or the mediaeval Inquisitor; none can now doubt that the conceptions of God held by the one and the other were idols, sculptured out of man's own spiritual pride and vindictive passion. The worship of such an idol produced a false conception of moral well-being, and it is safe to say that neither of these vast mistakes could have been made by well-intentioned men if they had been in the habit of coming into vital contact with intelligent human beings who

differed from them widely as to the nature of God and the nature of moral welfare. And in the whole world's history there has hardly been an exclusive caste or class or church or sect which has not, in one way or another, at some time, repeated the same moral bankruptcy. May we not assume that this is one reason why into the Ideal Life friendship with "publicans and sinners" must enter? Our Lord knew what was in man, and by His friendships He would give the world no excuse for believing any longer that a man could be good while he held back his skirts from the morally polluted. Nor does the evidence that He actually thus condemned the sin of separateness in religion depend on the verbal accuracy of our reports of His words, for the fact of any such reports existing proves clearly that He inspired His early followers with the belief that kindly companying with sinners was a necessary attribute of the perfect man. Nor is there any question but that the standard of moral goodness has been very much raised in the last hundred years

—and that with accelerating speed—by the growing sense among Christians of the fact that the worldly, and even the vicious, have certain characteristic virtues which are worthy of respect, and that heathen peoples have national virtues that nations nominally Christian would do well to imitate.

When we turn to criminal punishments we do well to hide our heads in shame. There are still to be found people who call themselves Christians and speak in the most vindictive way of the punishments that ought to be inflicted upon those whose lawless deeds trouble their peace of mind. It requires, however, no argument, no analysis, to support the simple statement that this vindictive spirit is not compatible with Christianity, that it was by “the least of these”—little in moral stature—that our Lord took His stand, saying that what was done for them He would hold done to Himself; while in the end He deliberately chose to be counted with evil-doers rather than temporise with

A vindictive
attitude
toward
criminals is
essentially
unchristian.

an exclusive and vindictive religion. To be vindictive is to be essentially anti-Christian ; and when, as is very often the case, the vindictive spirit is exercised in the name of good and of God, it is the abomination of desolation in a place that ought to be holy.

But there is certainly argument and analysis needed in relation to the very natural belief that cruelty may be kindly inflicted to reform the wrong-doer and guard the community—because it deters from worse wrong-doing.

But, it is urged, punishment, because effective, may be kind.

Is punishment an effective deterrent ? It is quite obvious that when disagreeable consequences, either certainly or possibly, follow from a certain course of action, a large number of people who have no very strong inclination to that course are more or less influenced in eschewing it by fear of these consequences. How far fear enters, how far inertia and counter-attractions prevail, with the man of average reasonableness, remains a matter for psycho-

Is punishment an effective deterrent ?

logical investigation. In the inner life of every man there is a region which eludes exact knowledge and requires interpretation; and history is strewn with hasty assumptions as to human motives which have been proved false.

Let us, however, dwell for a moment upon a few obvious facts seen in common

Illustrations
of the
ineffective-
ness of
punishment
as a deter-
rent—the
aviator's
fall;
delirium
tremens,
etc.

life. There are large classes of men who do not decide their actions by calculation of consequences. What, for example, could be more appalling than the fate of the aeronaut, who, by reason of some slight mistake, or some undetected flaw in his machine, or some unexpected tempest, is dashed from an awful height to fall a mangled heap upon his familiar earth? There are few things that appear so terrible to the ordinary mind. If Parliament were seriously discussing some method of stamping out a particular crime, and decided that to fall from a great height should be the punishment, should we not all assume

that only a madman would run the risk of being caught and thus punished for the sake of whatever gratification the crime might be supposed to bring? It is natural enough to form such an *a priori* judgment, but as a fact it is easy to observe that the risk of this appalling end has not checked aviation, nor would it deter men from anything else that drew them with as strong an attraction. "Oh, but," says one, "if the punishment of any crime were inevitable the crime would cease. It is the chance of escape that enables men to brave danger or encourages the criminal to risk the chance of detection." But pause a moment! How terrible, for example, are the results of drunkenness! What drunkard has ever escaped the blear eye, the palsied frame, the diseased organs, the loss of friends and public respect? Is not the punishment inevitable? And is habitual drunkenness stamped out? A little reflection thus shows us that the world is full of men and women who are not only constantly running the risk of horrid punish-

ments for the sake of exercising some aptitude or indulging some inclination ; but that there are in every community a certain number of people who are constantly doing what inevitably brings about a punishment which they are not at all willing to bear. Here is a university professor, wise, learned, and self-controlled, who has been told by his oculist that if he does not give his eyes entire rest for a year he will run great danger of losing his sight ; but he does not take hold of his life with both hands and say, "I will so arrange my affairs—denying myself this and that—in order to take this year's entire rest and return to my work wholly renewed." It is a possible course ; it is the dictate of reason ; but he does not do it. He takes six months' rest instead of twelve ; he only partially refrains from using his eyes ; and finally loses his sight. How many learned and respectable and religious men and women are there to-day who know perfectly well that if they lie awake worrying over certain circumstances which give them anxiety,

they will bring upon themselves nervous diseases ; and yet they go on lying awake and worrying when, if they would, they could change the whole centre of their mental activity by fixing their attention upon calmer and truer lines of thought. They could, but they think they can't. They sink in the moral scale as slaves of nervous worry, when each ought to be master of his own fate. Just in the same way does the thief yield to thieving, the procuress to the activity toward which she inclines. Each chooses the line of least resistance to his own nature and circumstances ; yielding to what seems to be the strongest drift or tendency, undeterred by fears of the most shocking consequence. The extravagant, the impure, the gluttonous, the over-active or the lazy, the over-anxious or the slack, the sharp-tongued—all these are bringing upon themselves consequences of an extremely disagreeable nature which they know to be inevitable and which they are not at all willing to endure.¹

¹ See note B.

Why do they go on pursuing their evil courses undeterred by the certainty of punishment? If we would take the trouble patiently to enquire and observe, we should find out that the great majority of such people are waging within themselves a more or less constant, a more or less energetic, battle against the course of action that brings ill result, and that they are under the impression that the fight goes against them, that for some reason or other they cannot do better than they do. What use is it, then, to come down upon them and make the consequences more disagreeable than they inevitably are? The result, in nearly every case, must be to them deeper discouragement, an even greater loss of self-respect, a "don't-care" or "devil-may-care" attitude; it would not be reformation. Where men and women initiate a reasoned course of action, and have the strength to persist in it, they will, of course, take into account not only the advantages but the

Punishment
does not
deter the
unreasonable;
the reason-
able are more
susceptible
to other
influences.

disadvantages before they decide to do it. But this is very rarely the way in which most of the habits of a life-time are formed, even in the case of the average person, and it is probably never the way in which the habitual activities of what we call the criminal class are determined.

We have seen that punishments, either natural or of human infliction, are ineffective with that large class of persons who have little self-control. It is also recognised that punishment is ineffective with those who have convictions that run counter to the accepted standards of the time. The men and women who are either in advance of or behind their generation, and have the mental fortitude that strong convictions bring, will dare any penal infliction. We well know that the punishments of a religious persecution increase the zeal of the persecuted. The same law has operated in regard to other causes for which men have worked and fought. "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church";

Nor does
punishment
deter the
prophet, the
pioneer, the
fanatic.

and the blood of pioneers has been the seed of all civic rights and scientific achievement. And it is not alone from good punished as evil that men are undeterred by severity of punishment; they have obstinately suffered and died for retrograde causes, and this so often that the proverb quoted above is but a particular statement of a many-sided fact.

Now, of course, it goes without saying that our present penal system cannot be abolished until some better system be provided; but who is to devise and provide any better system if Christians are satisfied with this?

There never
was an evil
without
some good
result.

It also goes without saying that very much good may be pointed to as the apparent result of the present system. So potent is Divine good, so does it dog with patient love the heels of evil, that there never was any evil force in this world which did not in its turmoil cast up manifestations of good. There never was any evil or mischief, any plague, pestilence, famine, murder, or battle, which did not appear to

entail something of good. Is there not in all this grave cause to ponder? We are not bound on any genuine Christian pilgrimage unless we have, each for himself, decided what constitutes that City of Destruction from which we resolutely turn our hearts, and what constitutes the Celestial City to which we are bound. The city to be forsaken and the city of God each represent conditions of corporate human life; but the turning away from the one and the setting of the face toward the other is the private duty of each one.

We are most of us willing to concede that in the training of children punishment is a clumsy instrument which we use for lack of skill in using a more delicate one; we are most

We avoid
punishment
in training
children.

of us willing to concede that in this department punishment and discipline are not the same thing; but are we all pressing forward to learn how to train children without punishment?

In the matter of social ostracism, we naturally object to drawing the conclusion

to which the facts of history plainly point, because we imagine it impossible to give our young people the right atmosphere, to preserve the sanctity of our homes and our national ideals, if from our ideal of goodness we cut out moral exclusiveness. And

the only answer is that whenever
Social
 outlawry is
 a sin against
 the spirit of
 Christ. man does all that is possible in
 approaching to a higher ideal,
 there is something further that

is possible to God. Is it not in the spirit of St. Paul's ecstatic hymn to charity, is it not in the spirit of the beatitudes of our Lord's Galilean ministry, that the moral futility of all historic social outlawries must be considered—whether such outlawry be that of what we call a "Gentile world," or a "coloured race," or a "schismatic sect," or a "vulgar occupation," or of the individual who professes some unacceptable standard of morals? Does not the path to a higher and holier life, domestic and social, lie in the Divine force of good which overcomes the evil from which it does not dissociate itself?

Again, we acquiesce in the criminal procedure of our day ; but have we first made it our business to discover how cruel and degrading that procedure is ; and have we ever exerted our lethargic minds to think of, or pray for, an alternative procedure ? Let us ask those who know whether our jailers, male and female, our prison chaplains and doctors, become, in their work, more Christ-like in disposition year by year, more filled with enthusiasm for the restoration of fallen humanity. Does their occupation breed in them a greater faith in that latent image of God in every man which it is the mission of us all to evoke in our neighbours ? or do they become more hardened, more cold-hearted and suspicious, than the average men and women who live in kindly and equal relations with their troublesome fellow-creatures ? If the occupation is hardening it is a bad occupation for any one, and the civil institutions which make it necessary are, so far, not good. As regards the duration of the prisoners themselves, let us consider this dilemma :

we are constantly told that if they are not made to suffer, the prison system

*Our criminal
procedure is
degrading.*

is inefficacious; on the other hand, if they do suffer under the discipline, that discipline is cruel. That reports prove that the majority of our prison officials become hardened, that the majority of prisoners do, from their own point of view, suffer cruelly—from loss of liberty, from indignity, as well as from certain rigours of the discipline—there can be no question; and it therefore behoves every Christian man and woman, to ask themselves very carefully what right any Christian has to acquiesce in any form of systematised cruelty when there is no real evidence that it makes bad men good, but

*We have
never had the
force of social
forgiveness as
a deterrent.*

a great deal of evidence to the contrary. Our social experience, when studied, seems to show that our Lord's command not to judge criminals but to forgive them, had much more common sense in it than we have been inclined to suppose. Forgiveness is not born of indifference—the indif-

ferent find nothing to forgive ; forgiveness implies a keen sense of wrong. Divine forgiveness is the inrush of the spirit of goodness ; human forgiveness ought also to produce the inrush of a new and higher life. It ought to be the most tremendous power for social uplifting that society can know, instead of being the negative and inane thing that we have made it—or rather, conceived it, for it is a question whether we have ever practised it with social force at all. We have great reason to pause and purify our own convictions. It is, in fact, necessary to our salvation to do so. I am convinced that we shall find that the command not to condemn but to forgive is more practical, more entirely the expression of what future generations will call common sense, than we are now able to understand.

CHAPTER IX

WARFARE

THE characteristic of the true disciple of Jesus Christ is that he gives up all that he has for the Kingdom, as in the parables of the hid treasure and the splendid pearl. All lesser and imperfect goods must be gladly disposed of for what is seen to be of supreme value. This is a mere truism of devotional literature ; but how meaningless is it to repeat such sentiments, parrot-like, while we cling to institutions faulty and imperfect because they are dear and familiar, not only because we are afraid of the consequences of letting them go, but also because their glamour is still over us ; while all the time we have seen the vision of the higher good !

Let us pause to realise again that the inward, hearty turning from the lower good to the perfect good, in so far as it is seen, is the individual duty ; and that we have no right to halt in our performance of this duty because we cannot see how the perfect good is to be brought about, or because we cannot see how our individual attitude can count for much. The immanent word of God, the sword of the Spirit, is the human will when surrendered to the attraction of the perfect good.

Instead of repenting our past acquiescence in evil, instead of having faith in the coming of the Kingdom, how eagerly do we cherish every argument for the retention of our faulty institutions ! How often, for example, do we allow even our religious papers to imply that the only alternative to a combative disposition in a man or a nation is servility and retrogression.

We are prone
to cling to
the familiar,
and cherish
any argument
that seems to
justify us.

In summing up the necessity for, and

the advantages of, such a combative dis-

position, we very often overlook the fact that in the earliest records we possess we find men in an advanced state of organised brotherhood, and that, even in

those earliest days, it was upon their brotherly relations that their welfare primarily depended, and these relations were neither servile nor retrogressive. Further, when we find a tribe growing in power and becoming a nation, we invariably find that it does so by means of alliances. Pugnacity and belligerence may clear the way before it ; but it is only by accreting other tribes to itself, and by persuading those whom it conquers into co-operation of some sort, that it consolidates and extends its power. This is aggression of a noble type. There have been peoples that were, in relation to other peoples, merely combative, but they made no progress.

Had it been the will to live at the cost of others that was the only conquering or

successful attribute of mankind, we should not find primitive man always in brotherhoods ; we should not find these brotherhoods coalescing and forming nations, and nations, again, thriving and becoming prosperous within the bonds of some large empire. These things were accomplished neither by cowardly servility nor by force of arms. Servile resignation to superior force does not produce that healthy subjection to law which is the mark of a progressive people ; it is therefore impossible by force of arms to make a subject nation prosper ; by mere force of arms it can only be exterminated ; and tribes, and even nations, have been thus exterminated time and again. By oppression you can rouse only revolutionary forces, which, if silent for a time, are cumulative. You cannot by oppression make two tribes or nations into a strong and useful alliance, or make a subject nation work with its conquerors ; it is by brotherly qualities — by even justice, reason, and

The spirit of
war is only
better than
servility.

persuasion—that men are made to see that they have a common interest.

There is, then, a third policy possible—and the most aggressive policy—which

The world-
regarding
spirit is the
most virile
attribute of
humanity.

consists in the will to live in a larger sense than men can ever live who thrive on the disadvantage of others—the will so to live that others shall live also. This world-regarding spirit depends on the power to see that the gain of some, to be lasting, must be the gain of all concerned. This is not the spirit of war, nor is it the spirit of resignation to oppression. The will so to live that others shall live also is no mere religious aspiration ; it has always been exemplified in every really statesman-like act in history. Even those who do not profess to be Christians have sufficient intelligence to recognise this world-regarding spirit as not only primitive but the most virile and effective attribute of humanity, whilst the will to live at the expense of others has always been only one degree better than servility and its retrogressive results.

Again, we find it easy to lend our minds to the popular assertion that our modern militarism is only defensive, not for any offensive purpose. We, in all Christian charity, only attribute the war of offence to our neighbours, never to ourselves. If, however, a nation is in the mood to go to war, it is always very easy, in this complex life, to discover rights that are imperilled or weakness needing to be defended. In Æsop's fable of the wolf and the lamb, the wolf was probably perfectly sincere because he was so much occupied with the desire to tear the lamb that he could easily persuade himself that his water was being sullied. And history, ever since it began, has afforded the same spectacle in international feuds. The real question is not, as so often stated, whether a nation should be willing, for the sake of peace, to see its welfare impaired and its peaceful subjects harried, but rather how rational international relations are to be attained?

The impossibility of drawing a line between defence and aggression is illustrated by the title of the wolf and the lamb.

Most wars arise from complex circumstances, and are waged from complicated national motives; but we usually allow ourselves to assign one or two main causes for each war of history, and regard the war as morally legitimate or otherwise as we think the main motive reasonable, and successful in proportion as the appeal to arms makes the cause triumphant. We very rarely inquire whether the victory has actually brought about an admirable result by the only means, or the best means, by which it could have been achieved. Until we have expert historians candidly analysing history with this question in mind, we can have no evidence of the value of war in the past.

We choose usually to ignore one weighty consideration; is it not true that whenever men have been prepared to fight for a certain object in sufficient numbers to make their victory possible, the desirableness of that object was already acknowledged by a large section of public opinion—a section really

The real end
is always the
triumph of
one opinion
over another.

influential in force of character? Further, if the public opinion in support of the cause is growing, it will probably become the opinion of the majority and of the statesmen concerned, and the war will be unnecessary. On the other hand, if public support is decreasing, a war, even if temporarily successful, will effect no permanent settlement. Take as an example the War of American Independence. Had not the principles of "No taxation without representation," and "The land for those who live upon it," for which they fought, fired the American people as a whole, and a great number in the mother-land, the issue of the fighting would not have permanently settled the question ; and it seems impossible to believe that, with such weight of opinion on their side, the right they claimed might not have been gained by peaceful diplomacy within a reasonable time.

Example : the
American
War of In-
dependence.

Although it has constantly appeared that war is the quickest means to enforce the righteous will of a section of public

opinion, yet when we realise that, after all, it is an unrighteous public opinion, as well as the ability to put it into practice, that must be conquered, we see that to take

War may enforce an opinion too quickly to produce the best result.

away the ability to practice an opinion without altering the opinion does not hasten, but retards, real advance towards our end. To turn again to the United States of America : in the war that freed the slaves the real object, as regarded the negro, was that he should share the white

Example : the American Civil War and the consequent neglect of the negro race.

man's freedom, which meant that he should enjoy such opportunities of education, of worldly prosperity, of social advantage and self-government, as he was able to profit by. But although force could, and did, make slave-holding illegitimate, it could not oblige the white population of the slave States to bestir themselves for the elevation of the negro race ; and the negro freedman did not receive from his superiors even the same degree of tolerant or indulgent support and training that he had received before.

No position of public trust, however humble, was open to him, no social consideration, very few educational opportunities, and very little legal justice. He lived upon land exhausted by bad farming, and in a community impoverished by war. The whole history of Southern lynch law, of the buying and selling of the negro vote in politics, and of the social ostracism of any one with the least taint of negro blood in his veins, together with the ignorant passion still attending the American race problem, all go to show how futile was the gift of freedom to the negro while the opinion of the slave-owning race in his regard remained unconquered. The only valid argument for using force to attain such an object is that the slave-owners might never attain to the mental attitude which would make their slaves really free until they were educated to it by enforced law. There can be no question that enforced law has an educative power, but enforced law is only the belligerent expression of a triumphant section of public opinion, and there seems very

little evidence to show that such public opinion would not conquer the opposite opinion more swiftly if it avoided the antagonisms that triumphant force inspires, and pressed toward the desired result with

equal energy by peaceful means. But Christendom has always called in the aid of the war spirit to right wrongs. Now this is the crux of the matter. Christendom, ever since it became sufficiently dominant, has not exerted energy to right wrongs without calling in the aid of the war fever. The fact that hitherto hosts of men have never pressed with great energy toward the realisation of national or international justice except when pricked to it by the sword and wielding the sword, is no proof at all that peaceful endeavour would not be the most effective form their energy could take if a genuine Christianity roused them to the like degree of kindly effort.

As a matter of fact, all earnest-minded modern Christians profess to long for the abolition of war. Why, then, do the great majority of us stultify this profession by showing ourselves all uneager to find any

answer to the hackneyed arguments of traditional militarism ?¹ Even if our religious newspapers were full of only inadequate and inconclusive arguments against war, we could at least feel that their writers were seeking the reign of God. It has happened again and again that the best arguments for a belief are only formulated long after the belief has become a factor in the world's history ; but the effort to argue must be made at every stage in the history of the belief.

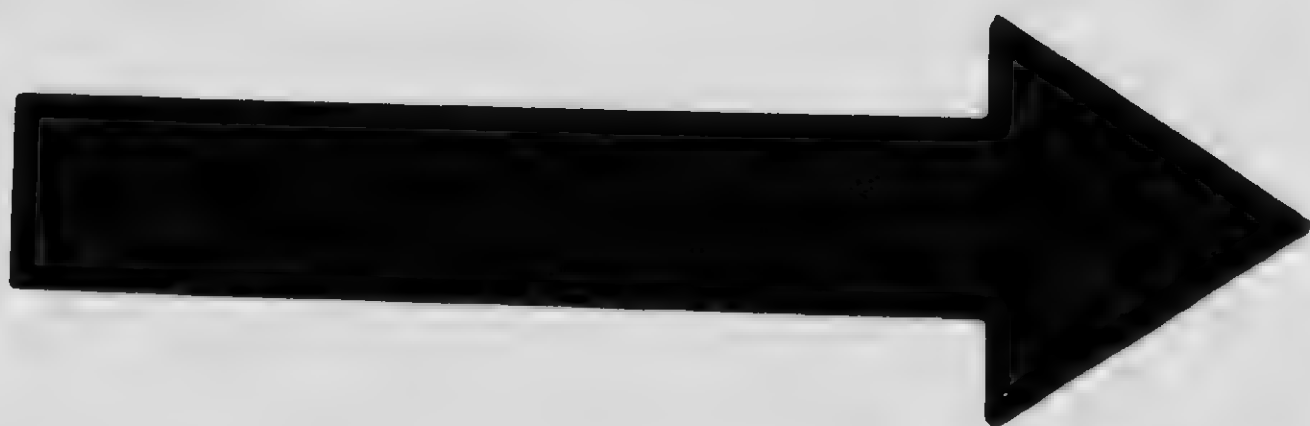
If we seek the Kingdom, we must at least tell ourselves eagerly that it is conceivable that the same money and men, time and skill, poured into a campaign of reason and persuasion, would bring about any desired change that war could only imperfectly compass.

But the bare idea of national expenditure and effort taking such a form is to the hackneyed mind unthinkable. Why ? For three reasons : it is said, (a) that

Probably the same money, men, time, and skill, used in another way, could always bring about the desired result.

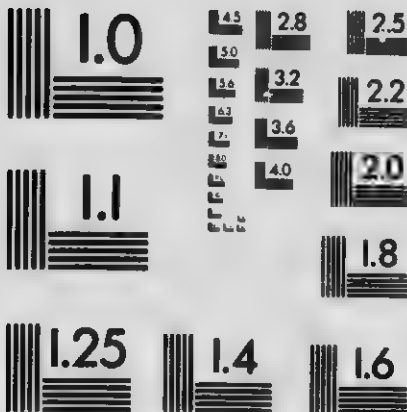
We consider it impossible for national effort and expenditure to take less war-like forms because we yield to the glamour of war.

¹ See note C.



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war is more honest and manly ; (b) that efforts toward international education on subjects of dispute are hopeless and ignoble ; (c) that military training affords a discipline necessary to a virile nation.

(a) Is our militarism honest and manly ?

Not long ago I was in a drawing-room when the clatter of horses' feet was heard. An Anglican priest, fully trained according to all our modern fashion of supposed Christianity, morality, and reason, rose with alacrity, and, drawing back the window curtain, pointed out a company of Territorial officers. "What a noble and Christian thing!" cried he. "There they go—ready to die for their country!" Here in a sentence was concentrated all the glamour of our traditional militarism. How entirely dishonest it is for any mind to allow itself to dwell in a half-truth—that most misleading of lies! Here was no ignorance; perfectly well did this man and his applauding hearers know, if they chose to consider, that a soldier is trained, not to resign life, but to be able to kill, that the risk of resigning

life is but incidental to his calling. The soldier is no mere international policeman, striving to prevent bloodshed and running the risk of death unarmed ; his object may be to defend his country, and by doing violence to prevent greater violence, but to that end he strives to bring bloodshed and shame, havoc and distress, to any people with whom his nation may be at war. If he were an international policeman, facing danger unarmed in the effort to prevent international crime by peaceful methods, we should not deck him in splendid clothes and cast about him all that romance and honour which now is necessary to veil the real nature of his cruel calling. I do not, for the moment, ask whether the act of slaying an enemy, bringing doom and desolation to his household and shame upon his nation—doing evil that good may come—is an act consonant with the precepts or the example of our Lord Jesus Christ : I am setting aside that question. I am asking simply whether the God of Christian

The honesty
and manliness
of our present
militarism
examined.

nations can be supposed to countenance the half-lies which form the glamour of war.

"Ah!" cries some one, "this half-lie is only the sin of parsons and women. Every man of the world has his eyes open to the cruelty of war. War is necessary, and we cannot be squeamish about its cruelty in a world in which suffering is rife; men and women suffer from many causes as well as war." But if the fact be so, is it fitting that the man who goes forth to do necessary cruelty should march out in gay clothes, to gay music, to do his ghastly work and to return to dancing and feasting, always in step with gay music? No! we are not savages; even in a Christendom that is not Christian this is not our ideal of the fitting or manly attitude toward such a task. Flags and uniforms and military music in these days belong to the glamour of the half-lie, which in itself is not honest and therefore cannot be manly.

We do not associate fashion and honour and splendour of apparel with our hangmen

or jailers, for these have the melancholy, if necessary, duty of subduing by painful force men of our own nation. It is just as melancholy a duty to subdue men of another nationality by cruel force ; for our patriotism has surely ceased to nourish itself upon ignorance and contempt of other nations—these also are our brothers. Setting aside Christianity, setting aside all the weaker sentiments of faddists, no educated man of this century can deliberately think it manly to symbolise the work of human slaughter by personal bedizenment and the waving of banners. It is done merely by virtue of an historic tradition—a tradition which has been the vehicle of certain worthy ideals, but is undoubtedly one of those imperfect goods to be cast away in the effort to obtain the good of great price, the hidden treasure—the coming reign of God.

Clearly, if war be necessary, and if we would be honest and manly, it is the duty of every parent, every schoolmaster, every preacher, to set this side of warfare very clearly before the ardent boy. It is the

duty of every mother, while her son still leans by her knee, to make it clear to him that if he goes out to face his country's foes he takes upon himself the sacred and terrible responsibility of being ready to slay his fellow-men, to make widows and orphans of innocent women and children, and to bring miserable poverty upon industrial populations the world over; that gay clothes and gay music are no fitting accompaniment of so dreadful a calling. The youth should be helped to ask himself what manner of man he ought to be who deliberately trains himself to be the minister of international slaughter. If, instead of training boys for this calling with the honesty that does not flinch in the face of fact, with the tenderness for humanity that does not minimise the awfulness of these facts, their parents and teachers prate to them merely of the risk they personally run and the hardship they must endure, and suggest only the honour they may win by taking this risk and enduring this discomfort, and speak as though their military operations

could bring no national poverty and wretchedness, only national advantage—if they thus prate, and if they encourage their boys to read a literature, or listen to a pseudo-Christianity, that so prates, they are at least in no position to criticise the enthusiasm for peaceful propaganda as lacking in manly qualities.

(b) It is surely time that we had outlived the pagan pessimism that scorns the idea of international propaganda on subjects of dispute. This lack of Christian hope implies that in such work the propagandist would have no primitive passion to appeal to, that his enthusiasm would be artificial and not disinterested. But the missionary motive that inspires the desire for international understanding is the vision of the larger good, which involves the highest welfare of both parties to a compact; and history shows that humanity has always been capable of this vision. The effort to bring about desired ends by brotherly methods rather than by war, by evoking the larger

Brotherhood
is a primitive
passion. It is
the larger
esprit de corps.

esprit de corps rather than the smaller, must be educational. National provision for such education is therefore both a Christian and a common-sense policy.

(c) Again, there is foolish confusion of thought involved in speaking of mili-

The struggle to yoke nature to the service of man offers ample scope for the training of brain and muscle.

tary training as an indispensable national discipline. Let it be fully conceded that unless a man's muscles are thoroughly exercised, unless he be trained in some active form of skill, unless he know the stimulus of some corporate enterprise, unless he be inured to hardship and prepared to face danger, he has missed, not only the perfection of manhood, but the joy of life.¹ Wind and wave, desert and mountain, mine and field, yield their wealth to the service of mankind only in response to disciplined toil and skill, enterprise and daring ; and the resources of nature are yet far from being yoked to the service of man. There is no class of healthy men who are debarred from tilling the land or battling

¹ Cp. Chap. III. pp. 47-51.

with the weather in the care of flocks and herds, or driving machines which require strength and nicety of skill, or navigating the sea or air, or, in fact, doing disciplined labour that demands the utmost exercise of brain and muscle.

Again, war apologists will admit that all other means of righting a quarrel ought to be tried first; but they urge that if these fail physical force must decide, and that men cannot use physical force in such a crisis unless they are trained and practised in the art of war. Let us honestly allow that as long as the appeal to force is the ultimate arbiter, a nation must have men able to fight; but let it also be honestly allowed that men so trained will be eager to exercise their skill in actual warfare, and so will not be eager first to exhaust all peaceful means of righting a quarrel. If you turn a man's energy and attention to the acquisition of skill in music, in dancing, or, let us say, in rowing, or indeed anything else, he will naturally delight when occasion offers to use the skill he has acquired.

And the man who has been trained in the theory and art of war will certainly not, except in very rare cases, be at all clever in discovering other means of settling a quarrel before fighting. The unconscious suggestion of his training, as well as the conscious exhilaration of doing what he has learnt to do fairly well, will dispose him to the militant method. There is a good deal of false theoretic statement to the contrary. Men go up and down the country saying that warlike training makes men averse to war ; but this is not based on scientific psychology. The truth is that men like to put to the test any facility they have toilsomely acquired ; the whole inner suggestion of their past disposes them to it.

What then ? Even granting that readiness for war is at present necessary, which readiness involves military training, obstinate embrace of evil as good is not a necessity ; a pagan piety which teaches our tender children that war is romantic and noble is

The man who
can fight is
usually de-
sireous to fight,
and slow in
thinking of
other methods.

If war is held
to be necessary,
the love of war,
the glamour
of it, is not
necessary.

not a necessity ; to wear gold lace and medals to symbolise proficiency in the art of human slaughter is not a necessity. When these things cease to be, the sons of the nations will not be attracted to the military life, and statesmen must perforce find new ways of settling international disputes.

The figure-heads in this great national activity are not to be blamed as long as religious sentiment is in harmony with the pomps of war. When the Church withdraws her sanction war will cease ; therefore there is no man or woman in any branch of the Church who is not responsible.

But the place and the time to repent of our corporate love of militarism is not on public platforms while our own country is at war ; it is in the closet upon our knees while our own country is at peace. Each follower of Christ who does this adds to the spiritual power of the latent Kingdom and helps to create an atmosphere

Repentance of
low concep-
tions of
romance, of
courage, of
chivalry, must
precede faith.

in which others find it more easy to repent. When a sufficient number of men are casting about with God-directed determination and high faith for something better than militarism, the something better will be found. The Kingdom is within reach.

"He that asketh receiveth; he that seeketh findeth; to him that knocketh it shall be

opened." Faith can conceive of far more splendid human pageantry than the pageantry of

war, of excitements far nobler, of sacrifices more dignified, of an *esprit de corps* to which the spirit that animates an army is petty. But without repentance there is no gift of faith.

CHAPTER X

PERSONAL VIOLENCE

LET us now turn from corporate militarism to individual pugilism. What is our common sentiment about this to-day? Are we in this particular seeking the Kingdom of God?

We have numerous pious stories for children, numerous plays and novels for the adult, in which some heroic boy or man starts to fight some rough or roughs who are doing violence to somebody, and if he succeeds in worsting them he is held up as a person wholly satisfactory to our moral sense.

If we analyse this, we shall discover (1) that the hero and all those who rejoice in his protective and punitive proclivities are

supposed to belong to a different class of

To thrash a moral being from the cruel and
 bully in evil people whom he fights ; (2)
 defence of the that he and his are in no way
 weak may be responsible for their evil-doing.
 necessary, but
 to rejoice in
 the necessity
 is unbrotherly. The whole temper in which the

hero of such a drama is handled is a sub-conscious reflection of the thanksgiving of the Pharisee. Boys and men do not normally take even a modest satisfaction in their victory if the men they thrash belong to their own family and are quite as virtuous as themselves except for some momentary fault ; in that case the whole affair would be a family misfortune, a scandal to be hushed up, a thing only to be thought of with shame or grief. No ! in such an affair, if the hero is to give satisfaction as a hero, the villain must be made of different stuff, and his villainy must result from a course of events for which the hero is in no way responsible. Now, in real life this does not, and cannot, occur. There is no sin committed in the community in which you and I live for

which you and I and our parents and grandparents are not in part responsible. That is the great social law to which our eyes have become at last fully opened. We are our brothers' keepers, whether we will or no: that natural law has obtained from the first; it is only the murderous instinct that repudiates it. The whole drift of our Lord's teaching is that this implicit oneness should become explicit. It always remains true that if we were more virtuous our neighbours would also be more virtuous. It is this law which, while it absolutely contradicts the common individualistic morality, increases at the same time individual moral responsibility. There is nothing more infectious than virtue, if it be real virtue—simple, hearty, and unconventional; but slackness in virtue is also terribly infectious, especially if it be respectable, complex, and cold-hearted. It is cold-heartedness that makes the bully torture his victim; it is a lack of imagination as to

Cold-heartedness and lack of imagination are responsible for the worst wickedness; they also cause the respectable to feel no sense of oneness with the degraded.

what the victim suffers ; it is a desire to slake the sensations of vengeance, or some other vice, in a sensational way because there is such deadness in the nature that nothing but acute sensation rouses vitality. This is the condition out of which the most abhorrent wickedness arises ; but it is precisely the same sort of lack which makes the respectable hero feel no brotherhood with the bully, no sorrow for his sin, no sympathy with his shame, and no responsibility for his degraded condition. And when to this cold-heartedness is added respectability and a complex vindication of selfishness and violent angers, there is immoral contagion. In all communities there may be good men and bad men, but the good man is not good unless his love for the bad man is such that he suffers in his temptation, and works to uplift his character as much as to uplift his own ; and a bad man's sins are shaped by his social circumstances : cruelty, for example, unless insane, results from familiarity with brutal animosities, and many such ani-

mosities are at present practised in the name of morality.

We have already come a good way, because the only object of fighting between man and man which now seems to us meritorious is the defence of the weak; and the main question to be asked is, Does it attain its object? Does it defend the weak?

For example, if A holds himself ready to punch B's head should B injure C, is B the more likely to wish to injure C, or the less? I think there can be no doubt at all, from all that we know of crowd psychology, of community psychology, that B will be much more likely to desire to injure C because A is ready to injure him in return. If, however, A be somewhat stronger than B, and C be under A's special protection, B will ultimately satisfy himself by violence to D or E. Evil passions will always find a victim. Further, the tyrannous temper of A toward B will certainly be reflected in B, because men of the same tendencies in a community do naturally, in some way

or other, reflect and inflame each other's sentiments, and in this case both A and B have the pugilistic tendency. The fact that A has sufficient education and self-control to limit his fighting to what he thinks a good cause will not hinder the fact that his readiness to violence will be reflected in all his violently disposed neighbours, whether or not they set it under his limitations. A's readiness to protect C by violence may certainly protect C to a certain extent, and perhaps completely, but it will increase in the whole community the tendency of the stronger to be violent toward the weaker; and the more A's exploits in this line are talked about, admired, and encouraged, the stronger in the whole community will be the tendency to use violence as a means of getting one's own way. The alternative is not, whether A should be willing to stand by inactive while B is maltreating C, or should consider it satisfactory to maltreat B in order to save C; the real alternative is, whether A, on perceiving B's

Belligerence
is inefficacious
because it
is infectious.

iniquity, should feel toward him as a brother or an enemy, whether in striking, if striking be necessary, he should feel degraded and brutalised or whether he should feel superior and triumphant. In our present low state of corporate morality there are many things necessary to be done that are degrading and brutalising if they are not felt to be so ; but if they are done in the spirit that recognises both their necessity and their abominableness, they are not degrading. A nurse, for example, would be degraded if she liked the sight of loathsome disease ; she may be ennobled if, disliking it, she volunteers to tend sufferers in the city slums during a raging epidemic when she might be doing more agreeable work for the same wages. A scavenger who liked his kind of work would be coarse, and would become coarser ; one who did it as a hard necessity might be refined.

If the object of a man's life be to protect the defenceless and the innocent from the cruelty of the oppressor, it is evident that

the only way to accomplish this purpose will be to bring oppression to an end by cultivating in the community an abhorrence of cruel methods ; for it is feeble to protect a few innocent creatures if cruelty, stalking the land, will only choose other victims. Cruelty must be eradicated from the community, or some defenceless person will certainly suffer somewhere ; and the process of teaching men not to be cruel is no more to be accomplished by vanquishing them in an open fight than is a fire to be put out by the addition of a little more fuel. That is why stories and plays that uphold personal violence as admirable if only the cause be good are not civilised.

Do any of us in decent homes to-day imagine that the lynchings of the Southern States are making the American negro less barbarous ? Rather, they will greatly increase his barbarity. No negro to-day with a spark of vitality in his breast but is not by such practices incited to evil passions which, like smouldering fire, will sooner or later break

Illustration :
the lynching
of American
negroes.

into conflagration. We in England can look at lynching dispassionately because none of our dear familiar moral traditions are impaired by the denunciation of it. We are scornful because we know that the fathers of the very men who lynch the negro to-day brought him by force from his own land, used him as long as they could for their own purposes, in many cases made his women mothers of their own children, and afterwards sold their own children into slavery. We know that since slavery has been abolished, in spite of the noble efforts of some of the former slave-owners, there has been no sufficient provision for the negro's training and education, nor even, in the first two generations, for his sufficient nourishment, for the land open to him had previously been drained by his masters of all its fertility. We are ready to think scorn of an "upper" class who practise shocking cruelties upon negro offenders; but we are unwilling to recognise that the well-to-do in every community throughout our Western civilisation

bear the same relation to their own ignorant and vicious classes. Our own moral sense to-day in the matter of personal violence is of a piece with that of the lyncher if we do not recognise our own responsibility for the villainies that are committed amongst us, if we feel able to sit at ease and suggest that they can be cured by cruel criminal enactments, and if we teach our children that, upon occasion, a victory over a bully in free fight is pleasant and meritorious and ennobling.

As a matter of fact, no one seriously believes that personal violence can be a factor in the Kingdom of Heaven. It is morally condemned, then, if we accept the belief that the Kingdom is at hand. But although to rejoice in it is not consistent with the practice of the presence of the Kingdom, we still believe it to be necessary to our modern civilisation, and vindicate it when we ought to mourn. How to get rid of it is a problem for corporate con-

The child of
the Kingdom
must clarify
his own
thought
before the
corporate
mind can
consider
how to get
rid of all
violence.

sideration ; but the first thing to be done is to clarify and purify our own thought in the matter. "Blessed are they that mourn."

We have need to realise clearly that civilisation as it advances is entirely at one with the precepts of Christianity with regard to all violence between man and man, and not, as many still suppose, at variance with them. Every man who is fitted by his physical strength to be a champion of the weak should keep in view three practical objects :—

Both common sense and Christianity teach that the man who would defend the weak must live to discountenance combative ideals.

1. So to practise some useful muscular labour that, acquiring skill in it, he will develop himself physically and mentally. So the virtues of courage and enterprise, together with the physical powers of the human frame, may be brought to perfection in the struggle to harness and control the forces of inanimate nature. Such labour will thus become the ideal of the growing child, in place of the false pugilistic ideals which now govern him.

2. To make it his business at all times to interest himself and other men in such social ideals as distinguish men from the lower animals, rather than in such practices as he may indulge in common with the lower animals.

3. To discountenance the belligerent spirit by pointing out that because it is infectious it must always be inefficacious.

A man who, whatever his personal prowess, does not keep these three purposes in view and live up to them ought not to be considered a gallant protector of the weak, for thus only can cruelty be stamped out of the community. Failing to do this he cannot be considered chivalrous, even though he always entertain the sentiments of hackneyed romance and hold himself ready, on certain rare occasions, to restrain a madman or thrash a bully. And if he does thus consistently act to discountenance combative ideals, he will be quite able to meet occasional emergencies—as when a madman may need to be felled—and may be fully trusted to do so.

The hackneyed mind, when confronted with an argument against combativeness, always compares the combative action, the indignant temper, with cowardice or indifference, and is satisfied with making the better choice of the two. That it is the better choice is unquestionable; it need not be trumpeted over the land by preachers and writers under the name of morality, for no man untainted by some physical degeneracy doubts it. What is so fatal in our religious morality is the failure to recognise its defect and press forward to a nobler conception of human life. In the days when our ancestors did not take baths, to habitually wash the face and hands was better than nothing; but it was not cleanliness.

It was the splendid triumph of the poetical genius of Jesus that He put forth the conception of a clean, corporate life, clean from murderer's stain outwardly and inwardly, clean because abounding with all the spontaneity and

Jesus proclaimed the approach of a corporate life clean from the stain of blood.

varied enterprise of unhindered kindness,
moulded into ever new forms of beauty by
the restraint of the Divine patience which
never degenerates into resignation to
wrong.

CHAPTER XI

THRIFT AND POVERTY

OUR moral tradition divides itself into three large departments; and the largest, most insistent, and most familiar of these is that which concerns the getting, the holding, and the using of material wealth. We are all of us involved in a huge legalised commercial system. We cannot possibly live outside of it; we are in it. If we should go, as some have done, to build with our own hands a lodge in the wilderness, we should be obliged to use the tools that were the product of this system, the clothes that were its product; the land which we tilled and built on

Our commercial system and individual independence.

would be bought and sold and taxed by it.¹ We are morally bound by it on all sides. If we give alms to a beggar we are actually injuring him because the whole moral trend of the system makes it degrading for a man to ask and receive alms. For the same reason, if a man seeks to live on a friend's surplus wealth, he is degrading himself; and that not only outwardly but also inwardly, because remission of an obligation imposed by the corporate mind can only come from the community; it cannot be individual.

It does not follow that it is essentially wrong or degrading for any man to take alms from another just because under our present social and commercial system it is so. At present it is degrading to take alms because economic independence is the ideal, and therefore good characters will seek to conform to it. Our question,

¹ "In an inmost monastic cell (the Christian) still must eat, that is, he still will be in economic dependence upon his neighbours in the market. His saintliness and its conditions will be inseparable from the traffic outside in the souls of men—in a word, as a saint he will live off the sinner."—N. S. Talbot, in *Foundations*, p. 16.

then, is, what justifies us in making economic independence our ideal?

We all agree in deploring the abuses of our present commercial system. Even though some of us may believe in rank and class as beneficial, we all deplore extreme inequalities of wealth and poverty. We deplore also the temptations to dishonesty and selfishness both in small and great mercantile transactions. But all this is no sufficient reason for suspecting that the system is not in itself as good as earth can produce: there is no good thing but may be abused. It is not in its abuse, but in the most perfect examples of its working, and in its highest ideals, that we must find it wanting if it is to be condemned.

It is by its highest possibilities, not by its abuses, that we must criticise the system.

Let us take the root principle of economic independence — thrift. The dictionary tells us that it comes from an Icelandic root which means "to grasp for oneself." Thus, the plant "thrives" because it grasps for itself what it needs out of the dead soil of the earth: thus, the

animal "thrives" when it takes what it needs from the vegetation of the earth. We, however, mean something other than this when we speak of that form of thrift which receives our heartiest benediction. We mean, when we apply the word to human affairs, not the greatest production of wealth for humanity out of the elements of insensitive nature, but the accumulation

and eking out of personal possessions. For example, a good farmer who aims at the largest return in crops for his capital and care truly thrives; but we do not call him thrifty if the income so ably earned is too generously spent. And so in other productive industries.

Now, all our Western ideals cluster round this idea of temperance in generosity, round ideas of hoarding and eking out possessions. Thrift! what a beautiful sound it has in our ears. We picture the frugal housewife denying herself and her family unwholesome luxuries in order that she

Thrift stands
both for
good
husbandry
and parsimony in
spending.

A beautiful
Western
ideal.

and they may glide pleasantly into old age, secure in every comfort. We picture the honest and benevolent man, in agriculture or commerce, setting aside such part of his income as might easily have been wasted, and investing the same so carefully year by year that he has a bright nest-egg to bequeath to each son and daughter, or a modest income for them, upon which, secure from poverty, they, exercising the same diligence and the same wise husbandry in gold, may, by the blessing of Heaven, bequeath in their turn to their children such fortunes that learned leisure may be their portion and that of their seed for ever! A picture which has not lost its glamour for most of us.

Thus, we are taught, has the greatness of Western Europe been built up. By this process of achieving economic independence does Nature wisely eliminate the unfit from the fit, raising the worthy by degrees, as they can bear it, to positions of power, while the swarming mass of the residuum lies weltering in the morass

whence they grew, dies off or merely procreates itself in the grub condition, without attaining golden wings, in order that the nation may stand before the world as raised and ruled by the fit! Thus we still talk, repeating, parrot-like, the wisdom of the great Victorian age.

But what we have to do is to inquire how far this idea may be the result of a very partial survey of facts, how far the assumption that this is the plan of Providence or Nature for the building up of nations is justified.

Let us begin at the lowest rung of the industrial ladder. Let us imagine some ancestor of yours, my reader, and also one of mine, starting out as lads in some past century—choose any period you like since the feudal system was abolished and men were free, as we say they are to-day, to reap the fruits of their own industry. Let us imagine them, for example, in a community of brick-makers, such as the chronicles describe, a number of huts on a heath, where the strongest men worked

*Inquiry into
the justifica-
tion of our
ideal thrift.*

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for starvation wages, and women and children were huddled together almost naked, decimated by the low fever that comes of famine and cold, all of them always hungry and dirty, without beauty, without recreation, clutching always at the food of a minute or the ease of an hour. Let us suppose our two ancestors both apt at learning a trade; they were therefore better off than boys who were dull, and perhaps therefore at the very beginning owed something of compassion, of protection, of help, to their fellows who were less apt and less healthy than themselves. Remember that on this lowest rung of the ladder, in the sixteenth, seventeenth, eighteenth, or nineteenth centuries, men have always had not quite enough to eat, and never anything tasty to tempt the appetite when weakened by semi-starvation, and no toys of any sort; they never have enough rest or enough clothing; cleanliness and all the amenities of life are beyond reach. And now I ask you to suppose that your ancestor was a large-hearted,

wide-minded fellow, who, when he had saved half a loaf or a penny out of his day's wages, could not keep it, but spent it upon some starving and sickly companion; and let us suppose that my ancestor, being hard-hearted, hoarded all he could save until he was able to get himself into the company of men who were self-supporting, and to whom it was therefore easier to forget that others suffered the pangs of hunger and cold. Well, now, which of us would have had the better great-grandfather?

Is there any moral law which would justify mine in feeling he was right in not expending his spare time and his spare pennies upon the brothers and sisters or companions who were weaker or duller than himself?

Let us consider by what means your ancestor could possibly rise above the level in which he was born and found

The
kind-hearted
man only
rise above
squalor by
patronage.

a family without sacrificing his more excellent social instincts. It seems to me quite certain that he could not have done so had not some one helped him in the same spirit

in which he helped others, that is, unless some one else as well as he broke the rule of individual economic independence. The way such things happen in real life is that some superior person, attracted by his cleverness and good-heartedness, would in some way or other become his patron, would, for the time being, supply the needs of the friends who were draining his compassion, and set him in a position where he, too, was relieved from the constant sight and sound of the miseries of the poorest class. In fact, being good-hearted, he would have to be lifted up by somebody else out of the larva stage and taught a new morality. His patron, after putting him into a better position, would need to appeal to the lad's selfish instincts, and to endeavour to curb and suppress his generous instincts. He would need to teach him that "Charity begins (and largely ends) at home," that he must furnish a house and marry a wife, and that his generous instincts would find full exercise in caring for his own wife and his own children and in only

a very small degree for others, that thus only can the wage-earner exercise thrift.

Thus, while my great-grandfather raised himself, yours, a much better sort of man, was obliged to accept alms. While nature, having formed my ancestor's heart with niggardly hand, prompted him only to individual thrift, the same nature, having formed your ancestor's heart much more largely, prompted him to spend himself upon the hungering neighbourhood, and the patron would be needed to teach him the whole duty of the poor man as understood by present-day civilisation.

But on that next rung of the ladder a man and his wife may gather their family about them and "keep themselves to themselves," as is the phrase of the poor. Here, already, the eyes and ears may be partially shut to the horrors of the destitute multitude, and the comfortable creed may be cultivated that the first step up is the result, not of selfishness, nor of gratuitous

The rising man will be able to ignore the cries of the needy by isolating himself and his family and establishing the fiction that the poor are unworthy.

help, nor of accident, but of virtue ; with its corollary that where the upward step has not been taken virtue has been lacking. When our imaginary ancestors found themselves, by whatever means, in the rank of independent householders, it would thus be possible to cultivate this artificial theory that poverty is always caused by moral defect ; it would be possible to cultivate the Pharisaic doctrine that certain defects have the curse of poverty upon them, a curse we do well to retain ; and, indeed, it would be necessary to cultivate some such doctrine if, in the scheme of economic self-sufficiency, a man is to rise step by step on the ladder with an easy conscience. Otherwise, natural compunction would be too strong in the average man : he could not hoard while his brothers starved, did he not shut his eyes to the fact that they really are just as himself—perhaps a little better in some respects, perhaps a little worse in others ; but in nature and emotions just as himself, and starving while he is satisfied. We may well wonder how such civilisation

.

as we now have could be built up if men did not, by some such fiction, blind their eyes, and so make it possible to lay by for a rainy day and to hoard for their children without being brutally callous at heart.

I would emphasise this point. The average man has too good a heart to hoard a penny when he is walking shoulder to shoulder with a starving comrade; a man needs to be abnormally selfish and callous to do it. The average woman will not lay by a store while sick and hungry neighbours are within sight or call. What we call thrift—the laying by for future use—can only be accomplished by the average person when he or she is mentally fenced off from poorer neighbours; and this fencing off can only be kept up by the average man when he is convinced that there is some immoral quality in poverty.

The proof of this is that this gospel of thrift has never been the gospel of the very poor—the larva who never attain to golden wings. They are always sharing their last crust, nursing each other's

children, tending each other's sick. It is not because they are in these respects more virtuous than we that they cannot withhold their lavish alms ; it is because they cannot get out of reach of their neighbours' pain, because they cannot even imagine that he is morally worse than they are themselves when the facts of his life are before their eyes.

On what, then, does our extraordinary idea of the moral virtue of saving money—of economic independence—depend?

It depends upon the shuttered windows of our houses and our hearts, upon our higher degree of material privilege and our lack of sympathetic imagination. We exercise an unsympathetic imagination ; we imagine thrift to be the saving of what would otherwise be spent in useless luxury ; and we say the poor must remain poor because they are thriftless. Only a few among us have been scientific enough, or sufficiently honest, to search out the facts ; and many of us in the name of religion

*The ideal
thrift depends
on shut
windows and
lack of
sympathetic
imagination.*

have abused the few who have done so. Had we welcomed their work we should have found out long ago that the only "useless" luxury that man, woman, or child on the lowest rung of the ladder can forgo is the sharing of his meal with the starving, whose moan is for ever in his ears.

Can we say that our notion of economic independence is in harmony with the laws

of God? Where are these laws written? In our consciences? Of which of these imaginary ancestors does your conscience approve? Are these laws re-

vealed to us by religion? There is no great religious teacher who has not enjoined upon men to share their last crust with the starving: Moses threw away the riches of Egypt; Gautama sold all that he had and gave to the poor; Zarathrustra lived the tribal life. Where, then, do we get this gospel of thrift which our Christian Gospel explicitly and implicitly condemns?

Has this
gospel of
thrift any
support in
conscience or
from any
religious
teacher?

CHAPTER XII

THRIFT AND COMPETITION

UNDER our present system of individual economic independence we have in our well-to-do classes a variety of social phenomena of which Christianity demands critical examination.

As things stand, it is the first duty of every man of social position to see to it that his family as well as himself are independent of the charity of others. Unproductive members, whether many or few, must be provided for, or else they can feel no security from the disgrace of charity or from starvation. Thus, in the well-to-do classes "making a living" includes the laying by for security accord-

At present every man must lay up money for his unproductive years and the unproductive members of his family ;

ing to the standards of the class concerned. From this we get several results :

(1) In every well-to-do class the age of marriage tends to be postponed more and more as the standard of living rises. I cite here an able eugenic argument as to the ill effect of militarism on the increase of population :

Soldiers are all of them both of the age of greatest life-expectancy, after reaching maturity, and of greatest sexual vigour and fecundity. Finally, they are all men, none of whom fall below, and most of them exceed, a certain desirable standard of physical vigour. . . . During their time of service all these sturdy young men have no part in the racial propagation.¹

Similarly our present commercialised public opinion tends to withhold a large proportion of our fittest young men and young women from the marriage state until many of the best years for parentage are passed. The young people of the professional class, of the shopkeeping class, of the superior

with the
result that
late marriages
have dysgenic
result for the
race.

¹ Vernon L. Kellogg, in the *Atlantic Monthly*, July 1913.

artizan class, must, if they would enjoy the sense of security, wait for marriage until they have, as the saying is, "got on a bit in the world." This must contribute to the fact that the greater proportion of births is in the "thrifless" classes. The mind of youth, which is able to let the morrow take care of the things of itself, is one of the necessary conditions of "abundant life."

(2) Professionalism, like a great cancer, is fixed and is constantly enlarging itself upon our social life. From the Christian point of view, every man has a vocation. God has something for him to do, to which he, with his peculiar combination of qualities, is best adapted; each has, by nature and grace, his gift of the Spirit, by the development of which he can alone adequately serve the community and please God. We have, scattered through the community, men with a passion for seeing justice done between man and man; men with a true vocation for healing; men with the ardent

Men embrace
professions
without
vocations.

desire to preach or do practical pastoral work. But how many men enter our learned professions every year spurred chiefly by the desire to make a living in the way least disagreeable to themselves! And as a result we have great bodies of men bound together by professional ties, ostensibly to serve the public, in reality strongly biassed in their actions and decisions by the necessity of getting out of the public financial security for themselves and their families. Into the professional gatherings of such men a deleterious crowd spirit must enter. The man

Lack of
vocation and
the mercenary
motive lower
the standard
of public
service.

with a true vocation for his calling, whether he be consciously religious or the reverse, will always, if left to himself, take the nobler view of his duty of service to the world. But his nobler ideas will necessarily become diluted when he is constantly or periodically under the influence of a crowd of men who possess merely the education of their calling, without a true vocation for it. And the

public are all too ready to accept views which they suppose to be the result of the expert knowledge of any class, which views are largely, if unconsciously, the result of the necessity of making money.

(3) In the commercial world, although a few men obtain sinecures by virtue of social position or the genius of the preceding generation, the overwhelming majority need to give their whole strength and attention to money-making in order to attain security, and cannot develop the sense of vocation for public service; while even those who are conscious of ardent desire for social service are hindered or embarrassed in attempting it by this same necessity of making money. All over the civilised world to-day work of the highest value to the community—public office, responsible newspapers, missionary associations, social service associations, co-operative institutions of all kinds—all are crying out for men of first-class business ability who will give disinterested service in return

for a reasonable though moderate salary,

Industrial competition drains the energy of our most competent men into selfish channels.

and they are not to be found.

Why? Because our young men are taught that under our present institutions their first duty is to provide financial security for their families, and they find this provision absorbs all their energies.

(4) There are in all classes a large number of men and women whose true

Persons whose true vocation is manual labour reject it because ill-paid.

vocation is manual labour, skilled or unskilled; so employed, they would be always healthy, happy, and worthy of respect as citizens and parents. But because such work among us offers no considerable financial gain, probably only moderate wages, they are encouraged or forced into professional firms or large mercantile houses, in which they easily become either impostors or derelicts.

We are bound to ask whether these are the conditions of the reign of God on earth. Let us read St. Matt. vi. 25-34. We have constantly interpreted these com-

mands to live as the birds and flowers live to mean that, in spite of threatening circumstance, indeed in spite of the certainty of coming misfortune, men are to preserve an inward tranquillity. It is true that even between the horns of the wild oxen man can find a certain kind of inward peace in God, and in all times of storm and stress this aspect of their meaning is invaluable to us. But I venture to think we have emphasised this aspect too exclusively. We may not forget that our Lord Himself, under stress of hunger in the desert, seems to have been more strongly tempted to take the wrong path than at other times; we may not forget that in His last agony our Lord Himself was tempted to believe Himself forsaken of God. It follows that we have no right to assume that the spirit of man can be so independent of physical conditions that he can live in the habitual equipoise God desires for him when hustled and driven by rivalries and fears. Indeed, the more

These are
not the
conditions
in which the
true spiritual
poise can be
attained.

intimate dependence of the strong as well as the weak on environing conditions is one of the facts of God's universe with which we are becoming more and more familiar.

The actual effect of social institutions upon life is not to be understood in biological terms. The relation . . . between the individual and society is far more intimate. It is much more like an organic union. One and the same set of qualities will take a totally different expression according as the social environment differs. . . . It is not human quality, whether original or acquired, that differs profoundly from period to period. It is the turn given to human quality by the social structure. As with the self-regarding, so with the more generous impulses.¹

In every known compilation of our Lord's precepts we find that the commands not to fear, not to be full of care, not to struggle, are not launched as independent of other commands, or without being connected with the promise of the Kingdom. If we take, in this same chapter of St.

¹ *Social Evolution and Political Theory*, by Prof. L. T. Hobhouse, pp. 56-57.

Matthew, verses 19-24, we see the social conditions under which these commands not to be full or care for food or raiment are to operate. No man is to hoard; no man is to be avaricious; all are to live with the one purpose of serving God. We have seen, as a fact, that the commercial system based on the hoarding of wealth and on avarice has brought about an intolerable degree of unrest and of anxious care for the necessities of life and of mercenary spirit. It belongs, then, to the Christian life to question very carefully whether this dependence on the individual hoard, with its accompanying development of avarice, is desirable or necessary.

It belongs to
the Christian
life to seek
better
conditions.

It is not optional, it is requisite, if we would be Christians, that we make this enquiry.

CHAPTER XIII

THRIFT IN ITS BLOSSOM

WE have reflected upon the meaning of our economic system to those intimately surrounded by destitution: to them it means that every penny saved for themselves and their families might be spent in relieving the actual needs of their own personal neighbours. Our thrift is first necessarily selfish, and it is upon this selfish foundation that we build such morality as we have.

We have also reflected on the classes raised quite above destitution, and have found that to them our system means that they are forced out of their share of joy in parentage with dysgenic effect on the race; that men with a true

So far we have criticised, not the abuses of our economic system, but its inevitable results among well-intentioned money-makers.

vocation to some life-work are overborne by their professional brethren when their views are unwelcome, or become infected by the spirit of the bands of mercenaries that infest their calling. We have seen also that the keenness of competition hinders the development of a sense of vocation, and, further, makes public or social service impossible or very difficult for most of the men who would be disinterested in it, the result being that it is done by many who are not disinterested.

Now, all this would be true if our economic system were worked throughout all its parts in the best way, by men desiring to be honest, kind, and God-fearing. We have taken no account of the abuses of the system ; we are judging it by its legitimate growth and herbage.

There is one more stage in which we must consider it, that which may be called its splendid efflorescence—the condition of the man who has won the prize for which all true sons of the system are striving. If our rich folk, our millionaires and their

families, fulfil a great function and are blessed in its fulfilment, this may suffice to palliate, if not to justify, the ill condition of those who are seeking riches with inferior degrees of success. Here, again, it is not by the man who abuses the power of wealth, but by him who uses it with the best intentions, that we propose to judge our system.

Perhaps the most important function of the rich man is to provide for the community an ideal standard of material expenditure, and in doing so to be a discriminating patron of art and literature. His house is the model of domestic architecture; the beauty of its fittings and furniture has a real social value, for on these, if his hospitality be ideal, his poorer neighbours may rest their eyes and form their ideals. The elegance and propriety of his manner of life, above all, the education and manners of his family, have a very real use in upholding a

Is the successful fortune-maker—the well-meaning millionaire—useful and happy enough to justify the cost of his existence?

The functions of the millionaire are—(a) to set a standard of taste; (b) to give money and leisure to public affairs; (c) to entertain national guests.

standard which reflects the taste and knowledge of the experts and teachers he can afford to employ. Especially in our younger nations is this function of the rich man obvious, and it exists, less obviously, in older communities.

Again, the rich man is at present of real use in giving away his money for philanthropic and national objects. So keen is the competitive race among men who cannot be described as rich that they cannot be expected always to give even a little to all such objects. Other uses of the ideal rich man are, to expend much time in public work and administration, and to give hospitality, not only to his friends, but to guests of the community and people of national importance.

We are bound to face the fact that in the past the rich man had many social functions to perform which are now much better performed by the public authority. The greatest individualist in the world does not wish to go back to the age when the function of the rich was to afford the only

effective protection the poor could get. The rich man also administered justice in his district, and gave to artists, poets, and musicians the only livelihood they could

depend upon. No one desires that these should be the functions of the rich to-day, a fact which suggests that it is possible that if the responsibility for certain func-

tions performed to-day by the rich man were shifted to the shoulders of the community they would be as well or better done.

All the functions of the modern rich man might conceivably be done for the public by public money. We have to prove that these things are done better by the personal possessors of wealth than it is probable they would be done by public authority before the usefulness of millionaires can be proved from the usefulness of their functions. To decide where the surplus of the nation's wealth shall be bestowed, and where withheld ; to decide what artists and artificers shall be patronised ; to set a

standard of taste, education, and morals ; to entertain the country's guests, supplying an interpretation to all they see and hear—these are exceedingly important social functions. Can we say that the qualities which enable men to make or keep money are those which fit them to perform these duties ? These qualities apart, some millionaires are wise, some foolish ; some have taste, some none ; some have broad sympathies, some are social bigots. We conclude that there is no presumption that the qualities that go to make a millionaire produce any special fitness for the discharge of such public duties as his position lays upon him. There is no presumption that the public will be well served by any set of men untrained for their duties.

If, then, there be no presumption that the public is advantaged by the presence of the notable successes of our economic system, is there any indication that the possession of surplus wealth is a benefit to those who possess it ?

By surplus wealth I mean an income larger than is needed for the fulfilment of recognised obligations to the common weal. A hereditary landowner, for example, might be a very wealthy man without having more than enough to fulfil certain hereditary obligations which both he and his neighbours may hold to make for the common weal. If these obligations are fulfilled, if in fulfilling them he feels himself to be the servant of the community, he is in a position wholly different from that of men who, having large fortunes created in industry, commerce, or speculation, must, if they would use their wealth for the common good, choose for themselves where and how to bestow it. It is very possible that the position of the hereditary landowner is not altogether justifiable, but it is certainly not vulgarising in the way that that man's position is vulgarising who has the choice between one object of financial benevolence and another.

While it is true that in all departments

of life limitations of time and strength involve the exercise of a certain choice among the personal offices, spiritual and material, which we can perform for one another, men are so made that the transfer of such help between them is sanctified by common lack and common limitations, though these are not experienced by all in common measure. Conditions so much common to all involve always potential, and often actual, reciprocity of help. Further, whatever a man gives of personal help means a closer fellowship, and therefore enlarges his own experience and refines his heart. The spirit necessary to personal help, passing through him, enriches his being as does the irrigating stream the thirsty field. The relation produced by personal help and the relation between the rich man and his subscription list or the distant needy represented therein, are obviously different. Wealth acquired by artificial conditions gives artificial power; and while the rich man holds the life of

The millionaire is inevitably and unconsciously vulgarised by the artificial power that wealth gives.

the destitute in the hollow of his hand, his generosity is sanctified by no personal relation with the recipient, it is evoked by no corresponding limitation in himself, and so represents no potential reciprocity.

For a rich man to sit refusing half the worthy applications for money that he receives, exercising his own petty judgment or taste as to where and when he will relieve wretchedness or put a spoke in the wheel of reform or bestow joy, where and when he will refuse to regulate confusion—this must be a terribly vulgarising process; and yet it is one that the rich man, if conscientious, cannot shirk. To play the part of Providence, to imagine that he has the right to withhold his hand when the cry of need reaches him, to pick and choose his protégés or his favourite charities—this, which is a quite necessary duty imposed by our present system on the benevolent rich man, must, of necessity, be a degrading process. Suppose that a man sat eating a full meal with a table full of hungry men around him, each as worthy as himself;

and, having more than he could possibly eat himself, occupied himself in deciding which of his fellows he would leave hungry, and to which he would give an occasional tit-bit, and to which he would give a partial meal, while all the time he went on eating plentifully himself! Are we not sure that when that sort of thing became habitual he would have become hardened to the hunger of others, hardened to the idea that he was justified in the capriciousness of his gifts and in the continual satisfaction of his own hunger, an unconscious megalomaniac.

All of us who are expending on ourselves more than is needed for our social efficiency are partakers in this vulgarity. We are at a feast at which we are over-eating, while men and women as good as ourselves, and little children, are looking on, hungry, very hungry, many of them dying for lack of the good things at our feast of life. And our tradition teaches us that we can do no more than take pains to select a few of the most worthy of the hungry folk to eat

our scraps. Our feast includes art and science and religion among its dishes ; but no art, no science, no religion, can really refine our feelings while we retain such habits of life. Vulgarify attends the alms of the rich. Vulgarify may seem a harsh word to use here, but our language affords no better. The blunted or crude estimate of things in general, which we call personal vulgarify, is always unconscious, just as personal refinement is always unconscious ; but the more refined person is conscious of a lack in the other of which the other can have no consciousness ; and we find many of the truly poor in spirit among us who are thus conscious of our lack. The very poor, who share all they have with their fellows, even though the hardness of their lives may brutalise them are not vulgarised. Their estimates of things are simple and natural. Richer men are vulgarised, for it is impossible for any one to shake himself free from corporate faults. Our present system, based on selfish thrift, is a wheel on which we are all broken.

As a matter of fact, we do not find that joy and wisdom and goodness and knowledge increase with the increase of wealth after a certain standard has been reached. Up to a certain (still undetermined) point they do increase; above it they appear rather to lessen. No one who has watched a town in our Western wilds grow from the stage of cruel hardship to that of moderate comfort, and from that to the stage of opulence and luxury, can for a moment question which is the stage of greatest happiness and moral welfare.

The good things of life do not increase with increase of wealth after a certain moderate standard is reached.

CHAPTER XIV

MATERIAL WELFARE

It is often urged that man's spiritual life is independent of material conditions. The proposition is nonsense. Yet those who make it a first duty to better the conditions of the poor are to be found searching for arguments to bring their action into harmony with this ridiculous assertion.

Every soul, as we know it, functions through a material brain, and this depends upon physical parents and their nourishment and environment. Furthermore, the development of a soul depends on its access to decent ideas, and these are the produce of a degree of civilised security. St.

Spiritual life
is dependent
on a degree
of material
good.

Francis, the apostle of poverty, came out of a wealthy nursery ; and every canonised saint, every ecstatic mystic, has lived in conditions out of which his brain could draw a degree of physical health and a minimum, at least, of civilised ideas. Take away these conditions and no sainthood is possible. It is at our peril that we fail to use our reason, which would teach us that if the conditions be improved we shall have more saints and better.

But there are, no doubt, in our religious annals many and very striking instances of lives in which a maximum of what we call spirituality is concomitant with a minimum of what we call material good. Such instances but prove that, given a certain material jumping-off place, the human spirit can dominate matter ; they do not prove that spirit is independent of matter or can develop without having matter to dominate.

Lives of traditional saints prove that spirit can dominate the matter on which it depends.

It is precisely to the domination of matter for the best ends that Christianity calls her sons. Admitting that the end is spiritual development toward conscious union with God, we have urgent reason for asking ourselves, what are the material conditions conducive to this? The spiritual attitude which arose from the effort merely to subdue and ignore physical conditions can hardly be held to be in harmony with God who is the creator and sustainer of this material universe, and we all know that this attitude has too often degenerated into

To seek to
minimise
and ignore
matter
cannot be
pleasing to
its Creator
and Sus-
tainer; and
communion
with Him is
the end for
which matter
ought to be
dominated.

toleration of ill conditions that ought to have been found intolerable, and a neglect of good conditions that ought to have been utilised. But there is a degree of practical truth underneath this would-be spiritual asceticism; it is that the best material conditions for human life are by no means those conditions that our social traditions point out as best. If our ascetics have erred in refusing to see that there is a

degree of poverty and material degradation which benumbs the spiritual life, our material hedonists have erred in refusing to see that there is a degree of wealth and a material exaltation which also deaden the soul.

Our whole traditional system, social and commercial, leads us to regard any increase of wealth and power as an increase of advantage. We regard our plutocrats as having the best material conditions because they have money and power in excess of other men. This idea of what is material good is the conception of the selfish heart; our Lord considered it a barrier to progress. What right have we to defame the providence of the All-Father by calling the condition of being richer and more powerful than our neighbours a good material condition? Does the tide of God-given life flow that way? Are the greater number of healthy children found in richer nurseries? Does the tide of God-given nobility of character flow that

Our economic tradition points to excess of wealth as material good.

way? Are the sons and daughters of our richer families more wise, more unselfish, more heroic, than those whose outward circumstances are what we commonly call less advantageous? A negative answer must be given, and this negative answer is just what the spiritually minded confusedly try to express when they say they do not seek material advantage for themselves or their children. They intuitively know,

and mean to say, that any degree of wealth or power in excess of the average is a material disadvantage, a handicap in the race for real good, a depression of real joy.

There is no reason to stultify the All-Father by repudiating His material good. The evil does not lie in the material nature of excessive wealth; poverty is just as material a condition. Dissatisfaction with material conditions is just as much pre-occupation with earth as satisfaction is. Physical health is a material condition, but it does not increase with wealth; power is immaterial, but it does increase with wealth

and is, indeed, its chief attraction. The evil of wealth seems to lie in having more than one's neighbours; and this seems to be a bad material condition, not a good one. It is our nomenclature that is wrong; the greatest material advantage lies in a moderate amount of possessions.

Both are equally material; the evil lies, not in matter *per se*, but in excess or lack.

When we return to the simplest idea of thrift—man enriching himself by the economic utilisation of natural agents—we perceive that what is degrading in our notion of thrift is the idea that it is man as a unit, and not mankind, for whose benefit the wealth is produced. As long as thrift means corporate production for corporate advantage—as it did, *e.g.*, in the ancient agricultural tribe—it is wholly desirable. It is only in its dealings with other communities that a thrifty corporate community can become selfish, pharisaical, brutal, or vulgar. If we can conceive of a universal community whose thrift only raised the universal

Within a community in which thrift raised the universal standard of living, thrift would become as ennobling as it is now debasing.

standard of living and increased the common store, such thrift would be ennobling rather than debasing. It could subsist with the highest standards of artistic and scientific work, and all its activities could be part of Christian worship.

We certainly do not see how this can come about, but we must all be convinced that where the treasure is the heart will be. If the treasure toward which man reaches consist in personal riches and their consequent power, his heart will be engaged in his individual interest. If the treasure for which he longs be the common weal, his heart will be engaged in the interests of humanity, himself included, and he will be in proportionately greater harmony with the All-Father. If the treasure at which he aims is the universal welfare in its conscious relation to the love of God, his own welfare consciously included, his heart will be in the Kingdom of Heaven.

This is, surely, what those who would practise Christianity ought to make their test of material as well as of spiritual good. We have great reason to ask ourselves whether a maximum living wage is not quite as necessary for the bettering of our earthly conditions as a minimum living wage, and whether, until we have believed the Gospel of the Kingdom, and have done with the notion that personal rivalry is the only adequate stimulus to human industry, we have any right to consider ourselves adherents of the Christian faith.

When we come, as we inevitably must, to consider the nature of the new order, we must distinguish carefully between the better social condition we desire and such constructive schemes as are, or may be, advanced for its building. The future cannot be dislocated from the past. All that is really good in past and present must grow and develop into a better future.¹ But the task of joyfully taking each separate step in this progress is ours by virtue of

¹ See note D.

our profession of Christianity. Would we make that profession true? Prayer is the desire of the whole man, thought, will, feeling, receptivity, and activity, turned Godward in expectation. To have faith is to have the conscious, semi-conscious, and sub-conscious states of mind soaked in the sense of God's goodness, resourcefulness, and power. The most unlimited encouragements to prayer are among the best attested of our Lord's sayings.¹

It is not necessity that causes us to dwell in the City of Destruction; it is our lack of repentance and faith.

There is no end that we can conceive to the joyful progress of the human race in God. But to the mistaking of evil for good which retards progress there ought to be an end; and I conceive that it was that condition of insight and harmonious progress which must then result which was typified by the Kingdom. So far our corporate pro-

¹ Cp. *The Gospel History and its Transmission*, by Prof. Burkitt, pp. 161-162.

gress has been slow and intermittent, because of lack of insight. The light of the single eye that sees truly the difference between good and evil shone with brightness here and there, now and then, as, for example, in Iran, in Greece, in the greatest Summary of Book II. age of the Roman peace, and supremely in the life of our Lord; but confusion and dimness always ensued. The flickering and dimming of the light was no mere veiling of a crescent glow, it was in each case a real darkening of the beam; but who shall say that permanent and unbroken progress was impossible because it did not take place? Who shall say that Jesus of Nazareth was mistaken when He taught that such unbroken progress might at once begin in corporate life and quickly become the condition under which all men lived? The world did not receive His insight as to what really was co-operation with Divine power; who can prove that the world could not have received it? It is the worship of evil for good in the conception of God, in the lot of man, that

hinders. Who shall say that to-day this false worship might not very speedily cease?

Professor Royce says, "We can look forward to a time when the work and the insight of religion can become as progressive as is now the work of science."¹ It depends upon us who call ourselves Christians how soon that time shall come. It is not a difference of occupation, certainly not a difference of communion, it is a difference of motive and world outlook, that determines our orientation. We stagnate because we have made Christian morality synonymous with faithfulness to duty as duty is conceived by a consensus of moralists. The mere acceptance of the name of Christ does not make a Christian act of the faithful sweeping of a room or management of a bank account or abstinence from vice. Christianity is the acceptance of the Christ, not as interpreted by the world's morality but by the implications of His own sayings and example—by His own insight into the things that were on the side of omnipotence

¹ *The Problem of Christianity*, last page.

and had survival value—together with the faith that His divine and universal reign is at hand if men will. Duties are not performed more faithfully in this faith than atheist or agnostic can perform them, but the whole atmosphere of the soul is changed by it; the most trivial gossip of home or club or market is of a different character. In the light of the faith of Christ thus conceived the problem of the sexes, the problem of capital and labour, the problem of the backward races, the problem of international relations, pass out of the region of storm and darkness, of just grievance, ridiculous assumption, and selfish passion, into the sunny morning light of affiance in God and practical wit. For when in this faith we say that “in Christ” there is neither male nor female, bond nor free, forward nor backward races, home land nor foreign land, the words “in Christ” do not merely refer to an unearthly sphere, undefined, incomprehensible, but also to the insight of Christianised social sense in the practical statesmanship of earth.

Without this faith we are even now in

the City of Destruction, for the civilisation that is not co-operating with God is certain to become disintegrated. Those who believe in and work for the triumph of the principles of Christ are surely much nearer the Kingdom—be their name for the Highest Good what it may—than are those who, with the name of Christ perpetually on their lips, despair of earthly progress or hope only in the triumph of the purse or the sword.

BOOK III
THE PILGRIMAGE OF THE SOUL

CHAPTER XV

RELATION TO THE CREATIVE SPIRIT

How may the pilgrim soul run joyfully and steadily from a life stunted by sin to the full life of the Kingdom?

Righteousness is corporate, not individual. When our Lord condemned Chorazin and Bethsaida, when He wept over Jerusalem and told His friends to shake from their feet the dust of the towns that rejected them, He implied the great truth that in our egotistic individualism we often overlook, that the law of God is far too great and splendid The law of God is too great for individual grasp. a thing for individual grasp or individual fulfilment. As long as laws and customs are wrong we are all more or less responsible for the wrong; as long as

corporate opinion is wrong we are all more or less blinded and infected by it. We cannot live up to the principles of our Lord's teaching either by giving away all we possess, or by keeping it ; by paying taxes to keep up prisons and armaments, or by refusing to pay them. In these matters we cannot, as things are, do right ; we can only desire right.

How, then, can we leave our birth-place in the City of Destruction and fly to the City of God ? Such pilgrimage is the persistent effort to create corporate goodness. We are in communion with the true God only in the degree in which we are seeking the salvation of the world. The Kingdom within is the missionary spirit, and thus the pilgrimage of the soul is inevitably a missionary journey. Just because we are bound together so closely in the bundle of life we cannot desire the Kingdom without causing others to desire it, for feeling is infectious. We cannot have any glimpse of the universal

The pilgrimage of the soul is a missionary journey.

salvation without causing others to see it also.

Thus the pilgrimage of the soul consists in an ever clearer view of the beauty of corporate goodness, and an ever deepening desire for it. We have it on our Lord's authority that this thirst for righteousness—which is prayer—always attains. The pilgrimage of the soul is from want to attainment, from the place of loneliness to the place of communion.

The place of communion is ^{Desire which is prayer always attains.} the realisation of being at one with God in any direction in which the momentum of our will is flowing. Entreaty, if it does not produce this sense of oneness, is futile. Expectancy, if directed to some magical result apart from the inward personal momentum, is futile.

It is just here that the great mass of that religious activity that goes by the name of prayer fails. We entreat God to do things without arriving at the certainty that He is determined to do them; or

else, when in this entreaty we become assured that His will is one with ours, we recede into passivity, expecting some magical response. It appears to me that our Lord's whole teaching shows that prayer consists in that communion which will make clear to us what God's will is, and then in whole-heartedly co-operating with Him, convinced that, although we may incidentally meet bodily suffering or death in the doing of it, the thing shall be done, and we shall rejoice in its accomplishment. The rewards that are offered to prayer are the achievements of the divine activity within us.

Let us imagine some fairy spirit in a mythical world, who knows that the creative power that upholds him and his world is a power intent upon universal well-being, and knows that this creative power can only work in so far as it is relied upon and co-operated with. How could such a spirit ever experience fear? To fear would be to

cease to rely upon the upholding power, to inhibit its working, seeing that the power can only work in response to reliance. How could such a spirit ever feel ill-will or anger? because such a feeling would prevent co-operation, and inhibit the working of the power which made for universal well-being, in which its own well-being was included. In the case of such a spirit we can see this clearly, for we think of the power that makes for social righteousness and well-being in his mythical world as some elemental force, unmoved by human passions, about which we can use the neuter pronoun. It is because in attributing personality to God we attribute to Him our caprices, our angers, our fears and indignations, that we cannot believe that God is that Power that makes for universal well-being, which will only work when relied on and co-operated with. We are so confined in our thoughts by our constant experience of the limitations of

God must be
conceived as
Personality
that knows
no caprice,
and as Power
that knows
not such
limitations
as attend the
forces of evil.

evil forces that we cannot believe in a superior Power which does not know limitation when its conditions are complied with.

We find it hard to believe that God is able to restore creation by the activity of love, even though we are willing to admit that He is the creator and could have no motive but that of love in the act of creation. We cannot bring ourselves to believe that He is reliable in response to our reliance, and therefore we do not rely upon His invisible power. But I think that if we take this conception of God as Personality without caprice and Power unlimited except as limited by man's failure to co-operate, and interpret the story of our Lord's life and teaching by this clue, we shall find that all we have supposed to be incompatible with practical life becomes wonderfully practical, and that the whole falls into a harmony. We shall then see that the repentance that He called for was a corporate refusal to acquiesce any longer in any evil condition as of God's ordinance,

just as much as it was an individual refusal to acquiesce any longer in inward anarchy or discord of soul. We shall see that His Messianic consciousness consisted of love and meekness and service, experienced as the manifestation, and the only manifestation, of Divine omnipotence. We have developed no language to express this conception of love which combines unerring and absolute potency over all things with the absence of all intrusion, coercion, or self-assertion — a re-creative force related to the time process. Our Lord conceived of creation as fundamentally good, fundamentally free. If He saw the world as about to be perfectly restored by freely becoming a function of Divine love, His Messianic consciousness would be the conception of Himself as experiencing the uninterrupted flow of pure, Divine love, potent to serve, potent to endure, potent to re-create and dominate, only by restoring freedom to the world.

When we thus think of it, we get rid

of that whole problem of the theologians as to how perfect human goodness is consistent with the claim to Messiahship. Perfect human goodness is entirely consistent with the claim to serve, with the claim to feel toward men no emotion but that of love, with the claim to govern men only by the love, the faith, that sets them absolutely free from all trammels and makes them masters of themselves. The king of a kingdom that is set up in the innermost thought of every subject rules in a sense for which we have no metaphor. It is

The
consciousness
of Messiah-
ship was the
con-sciousness
of the love
that sets men
free.

toward these ideals we must travel. Our notions of government—founded upon the power to compel the loyalty that is not freely given, founded upon the power of hatred and ill-doing to enemies, instead of love and blessing—are all quite as far astray from the conception of the Kingdom as taught by our Lord as were the crude notions of a military Messiah held by the Zealots of His day. The Christ is still among us, trying to spiritualise

our notions of the earthly state and of His own kingship over it, unable to manifest His authority among us until we are able to realise that the only real power in the universe never stoops to intrude or to compel or to punish, but will only rule by attraction, and only attract by bestowing freedom. The Messiahship of our Lord is still a secret, just as much as it was a secret in the early days of His Galilean ministry ; for it can only be divulged to us as we learn that all our notions of glory and power are childish if they include anything not summed up in the dignity of humility. "He that is greatest of all shall be your servant." "I am among you as one that serveth." The Christian pilgrim must travel from our present ideals to this divine ideal of the vigour and power of love.

The clouds of heaven—are they not formed of the fogs of earth ? The glory of them—their light and majesty—is nothing more than sunlight and shadow on what is of earth. So the glory of the clouds on

which He shall one day be seen is nothing other than the love and loyalty which rises spontaneously from free hearts made so great by the gentleness of God that they can see and reflect His gentleness.

The Christ did not first "enter in at lowly doors" in order that He might afterwards smite with His obvious magnificence. Jesus Christ is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." "With God is no variableness or shadow of turning." The power of God is always the principle of life — wholesome, immune, beautiful, prolific, all-conquering—which unfolds from within until it leaps into perfect communion with all that is best in the human heart in natural

The power
of God is
the principle
of life.

affection. The consciousness of absolute and unswerving love to all in the heart of the Christ leaped into conscious communion with the heart of the Father, and brought about that great event of Divine love manifested to the uttermost on earth, by which we are saved.

CHAPTER XVI

RELATION TO THE BODY

IN predicting and ushering in a life of obedience to God and harmony with God, Jesus accepted the Jewish conception of the Kingdom of God as the best metaphor for His ideal. Now, it was a recognised fact that in the Kingdom of God there was to be no disease, and He declares this Kingdom to be even now immanent. In the vision of the Jewish seer God had a work and a purpose for the human commonwealth that could only be accomplished by an unblemished nation, clean and wholesome, unconscious of the workings of the body as only healthy creatures can be unconscious.

The first
hard fact
that the
pilgrim soul
must face is
the physical
body.

Now, those who thus live in the temper

inculcated by Jesus are at present within the Kingdom; and one of the privileges of that Kingdom—
 Health of body and mind the privilege of the child of the Kingdom. certainly the whole drift of the Gospel shows this—is health of mind and health of body, the abundance of Divine life manifested in the flesh. If we have any history at all of the earthly life of our Lord we know that He chose to be recognised as a healer and exorcist. He would not give the slightest countenance to the desire, rife in His time as in ours, to simplify the idea of the spiritual life by regarding it as imprisoned and hindered by the body. He taught that the spiritual life was manifested in, and served by, the body.

The Gospel story certainly suggests that the Christ came to give to the spirit of man the freedom of the body, the control of it, the use of it, the dominion over it, instead of man being enslaved by its desires, impotencies, and diseases. The child of the Kingdom must turn his face toward the realisation of health.

There is in the annals of modern medical science curious proof that our Lord was in the line of physical and psychological law, and waving no mere magician's wand, when He inculcated in His followers the conquest of the world by a temper of serenity and dominating meekness and love to the uttermost, and, at the same time, in this faith offered them health. Every modern physician is announcing the fact that there are certain conditions of the conscious and sub-conscious mind which make for bodily health and strength, and certain conditions which detract from it; and where medical science is most in advance, it has already recognised the power of certain states of mind to bring about the cure of disease, and to make men immune from disease.

Medical
psychology
corroborates
the principle
of the
Sermon on
the Mount.

We are told that what we call "righteous indignation" inhibits the flow of the vital force in the body in exactly the same degree as unrighteous indignation. A good man's anger with a bad man produces a poisoned

condition in the nerve centres as surely as a bad man's anger with a good man. Fret on account of the unchristian condition of the lapsed masses brings on neurasthenia as certainly as fret over a gamble on the Stock Exchange. Despondency over personal sin undermines the health just as much as the despondency of mortified vanity. A thousand distresses and antagonistic passions, which have been considered not only legitimate for the Christian life but peculiarly characteristic of it, are unquestionably the links in a slavish chain—subjection to, or liability to, disease or insanity—in which the Church on earth has long agonized. He who came to take away oppression, to announce release to the captive (Luke iv. 18), would not have accomplished what is profitable for the life that now is, or what would make this earth the best school for the life that is to come, if He had taught and exemplified no deliverance from this slavery. In this life we ought not to expend our attention, our time and money, upon the diseases of our

own souls or bodies. Therefore it is at our peril that we continue to interpret any part of our Lord's teaching as acquiescence in those tempers and activities of mind which are found incompatible with mental and physical health.

Furthermore, medical science teaches us that healthy activity along the line of some satisfying purpose is the best safeguard of health. To be inactive, or to indulge only in the desultory activities the choice of which involves constant reference to personal pains and pleasures, is to invite chronic diseases. To fill one's life with a practical enthusiasm that does not become monotonous or pall upon the taste is the modern panacea. Therefore it is at our peril that we are satisfied with a type of religion which does not involve some passionate and practical purpose.

The pilgrim soul must see ever more clearly the shame of disease, and ever more deeply desire the saving health of God for humanity.

The sentiments and passions detri-

mental to health are exactly those which Jesus condemned. God is a God of order. If a man hold his hand in the fire, faith in God will not prevent his flesh being burnt; if he hold his spirit in the fires of hell, health will not be manifest in his physical frame. We are not to be blamed for the mistakes into which we are born; we are to blame only if we remain in darkness after catching a glimpse of the light; and at present we may catch rays of light on this subject from many different sources.

What is disease? Ascetic notions inherited from our pagan forebears have so commonly glorified disease by proclaiming it God's chief angel of spirituality that we have not stopped to do Him the reverence of observing what the facts of disease really are.

In the first place, it is abnormal, because under fair circumstances the human being

tends to revert to health. Over and over again, in the early days of our colonies, we have seen stunted, ill-thriven settlers, with bad heredity, rear a family of better

What
disease is :
(a) abnormal,
(b) unclean,
(c) wasteful.

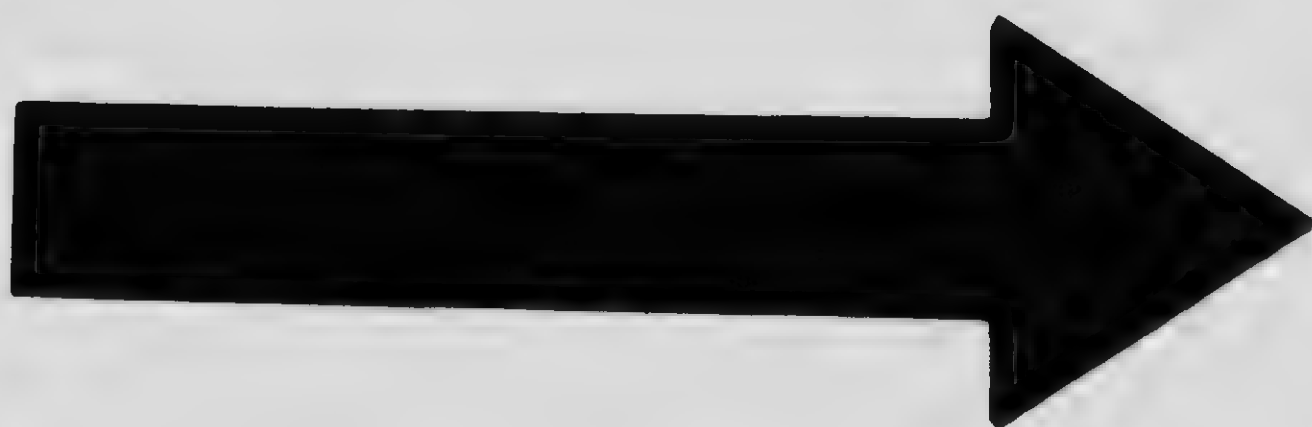
stature and better health than themselves, and their grandchildren were observed to be again larger and more robust. Such reversion to health is only a dramatic instance of a scientific commonplace. We are warranted in setting down disease as abnormal.

Secondly, all its abnormalities are—from the point of view of beauty, order, economy—disgusting. They mean, every one of them, that some stream that ought to be pure is impure, that some tissue that ought to be clean is unclean. In a diseased system the stream of the heart's blood, which ought to be cleansed by the exquisite respiratory process of oxygenation, is not cleansed, or some food which ought to be changing by a beautiful and delicate chemical process into clean living matter, is, instead, decaying within the living organism, acting within the veins, or within the tissue, exactly as filth and decaying matter act in our streams or our streets. If you think of a limpid stream running through a beautiful garden, and think of it again filled with the refuse of

the slaughter-house, thick with the garbage of a village, its banks as foul as its water, evil-smelling, poisonous, you have a very good illustration of what food not thoroughly assimilated produces in the body, of what blood not thoroughly oxygenated is. Are we such children as to suppose that because the scale is smaller, that because the filth is microscopic, it ought to be less disgusting to the right-thinking mind? Do we imagine that it is not clear to God's mind because to us it is microscopic? The very orthodoxy that teaches us to glorify this sort of thing as the will of God, teaches us that the body is the temple of God, a living sacrifice that ought to be offered to Him without spot or blemish. Can we accept these contradictory doctrines? In truth, every form of ill-health is unclean.

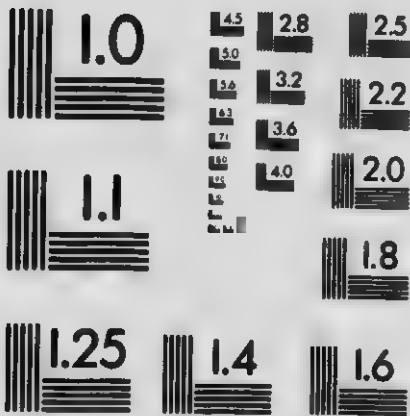
Thirdly, it is wasteful. For quite a long time, now, every Christian society that sends out missionaries to do the highest spiritual work of converting men to the knowledge of God and building

them up in that knowledge, has found it necessary to apply a strict physical test before taking any candidate into its service. This fact speaks for itself, and it is sufficiently obvious of every kind of religious and social service, except one, that ill-health reduces the working value of the individual. The one service not thus impeded obviously is prayer; but it is a very serious question whether it has not been one of the greatest mistakes in religion to suppose that prayer can ever be as effective when divorced from social activity. We are ready now to hold this true of the prayer of the cloistered saint; it is no less true of such invalids as are his modern representatives. It is not in the effort to forsake the world for God that man has seen the truest vision of Divine Love, but in the effort to bring God into the world. It was the pagan idea that the body was the enemy of the soul that gave rise to the notion that the weak and sickly could exercise most perfectly the gift of prayer. While a diseased life, that can



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know no other service than prayer, may undoubtedly thus serve, it is also true that the same person in health, steadfastly desiring to pray, would produce better results. And to the waste of the patient's life we must add the tragic expenditure of time, money, and energy lavished daily in mere attendance upon the sick.

But until the Kingdom is universal its servants are certainly offered no immunity from physical injury; a wound in a healthy body, which heals healthily, is not disease. Disease often involves pain and suffering, but pain and suffering do not involve disease. Some devotional writers, failing to observe this, have made curious confusion of this subject.

Physical
injury and
pain are not
disease.

Again, the child of the Kingdom must suffer grief. If we consider the emotions of such souls as would seem to have had personal experience of God and left a record of it, we shall find that they all claim that the inward vision of God fills

Grief for sin
and wrong,
heightened by
a background
of deeper joy,
cannot be
avoided.

the soul with exalted gladness, so that, ravished by the ineffable loveliness of God, it is attuned to the love of His whole creation. We have, thus, the picture of the God-loving man—such as Plotinus or any other—receiving only gladness while the inner gaze of his spirit is directed toward the ineffable Divine Light. Let us ask how far, when the gaze of such an one is of necessity turned again upon his earthly surroundings, his sense of Divine gladness ought, as a result of this glad vision, to be superseded by trouble roused by the world as it is, in which is included his own sin—grief for which will be heightened as in direct contrast with the beatific vision.

Undoubtedly the sight of earth with its abnormalities must cause grief. Sin and disease in organic nature, barrenness and disutility in inanimate nature, must give pain. But the emotion of grief is distinct from the annoyance of thwarted desires, of indignation and antagonism toward all that we are forced to disapprove, for it can be experienced without these. Grief is

strangely akin to joy, as tears are akin to laughter. It is always measured by a sense of the worth of what is not. This sense of worth has its root in a high conception of the value of existence. Grief thus stands firm in the belief in a good constitution of things, and this belief in the good constitution of things must always be an underlying joy greater than any grief. If everything is a vain show, or merely transient or evil, nothing is worth grief; the knowledge that the joy for the absence of which we grieve was near, or was possible, is of the essence of sorrow. To the God-loving man, who has the belief in underlying goodness, for whose every thought God is the starting-point and the goal, annoyance, worry, and indignation which toss the unattached soul must cease. But grief must exist in the Christian man together with unspeakable joy. In his life there must always be the constant endeavour to remove the cause of grief, and the free exercise of faculty in that high and holy endeavour. Such grief, enveloped

in a deeper joy, giving birth to hope and courage, does not militate against physical health. It spurs to rational activity in reliance on an able and reliable God, and it does not inhibit the flow of the life-force and cause disease.

The practice of Christianity, then, involves the turning away of the mind from all anger, fret, or despondency, from all belief in disease as the visitation of God, from all the traditional acceptance of ailments of the flesh as the inevitable lot of humanity, from all acquiescence in the waste that goes on all over the world in the partial and inadequate treatment of diseases which ought not to exist. And while the individual is by himself powerless to create a healthy atmosphere, because we are members one of another, it is incumbent upon him, if he would practise Christianity, to believe that a corporate repentance will bring about a corporate condition of physical health. And the pilgrim soul has already the power to create within itself,

The pilgrim soul, by losing its life of care and hostility, will find its bodily life.

and for its own body, an ever greater degree of health.

We have been led to see that the bringing about of the reign of God upon earth involves not only the highest spiritual activities of soul, but the practical re-creation of earthly conditions. In that

re-creation it is obvious that the first task of the soul is the re-

novation of its body. The objective of Christian endeavour is not escape from the physical plane, but the re-making of the physical that it may answer perfectly to the spiritual ideal. Jesus undoubtedly came preaching that men should turn from all that was imperfect and look with expectation to God for all that was perfect, and in this expectation it would certainly appear that the child of the Kingdom may include perfection of physical life. By losing his life of contention, hostility, and care, he will find the life of the body.

CHAPTER XVII

RELATION TO THE FAMILY

THE pilgrim soul is never alone on earth. The simplest relation, that of the family tie, underlies all our notions of social duty. The tribe is just an enlargement of the family idea. So also is the social class within a nation. An aristocracy is a clan of the well-born. And all our notions of guilds and societies and clubs and groups of people with common interests are in reality just extensions of the idea—derived from the family—that a group of persons with a common past or a common hope must stand together as against the outer world.¹ A nation is a further extension of

The idea of the family underlies all larger social relations.

¹ Cp. Prof. Royce in *The Problem of Christianity*, Lect. IX. sections 11, 12.

the idea of the family group; and an empire, as a combination of nations, is the largest extension of the idea we have yet reached.

If these are all essentially one idea, and if we can discover what the practice of Christianity is in the family relation, we shall discover also what it is in all these other and larger relations. If we can catch a glimpse of the vision that Jesus saw concerning this, which is the all-important matter for man on earth, we shall have gone very far toward reforming all our social tradition.

A glimpse of our Lord's vision of the simplest social relation renovates our ideas of every human relation.

We have seen that in criticising the Jewish divorce law our Lord seems to have linked His teaching on this point with other teaching the significance of which depended on the character of God; thus expressing His conviction that the marriage tie was a super-personal bond,¹ resting, as did the bond between

¹ See note E.

man and man, between neighbour and neighbour, upon the fatherly relation of God, who sends His sunshine and His rain alike on the evil and the good, on the thankful and the unthankful.

If duty to such a God be the pivot of all our social relations, it is plain that love is not to be limited and regulated by the feeling of attraction to one person or another in any relation of life.

Thus it is clear that love is not to be limited by the feeling of attraction.

This has been perceived in all times and places of Christendom, but, unhappily, it has given rise to the ascetic teaching of much devotional literature which regards family affection as in itself misleading, something reprobated by Jesus as inferior, and to be sacrificed for the higher life; while Christian love in any sphere is represented as compatible with all sorts of hostile feelings and punitive activities. The cause of this double sophistry has been worship of a God hostile to nature. Duty to the Divine Father, who is kind with both spiritual and material kindness

to the unthankful and the evil, the enemy
 and the heretic, who withholds
 no good thing on the ground
 of lack of desert or positive
 transgression—duty to such a
 God clearly leaves room for no
 doubt as to the wholesomeness or
 authority of all healthy natural affection,
 while condemning its selfish limitations.

What naturally attracts the childlike
 and the humble wherever he meet it, what
 engages his entire affection with unerring
 certainty, is the personal kindness that
 gives and forgives. If this kindness be
 indeed the kindness of God, as Jesus
 affirmed, the affection of the childlike and
 the humble for the Christian God is already

Conceiving
 God as one
 with normal
 nature, the
 affection of
 the normal
 heart is
 already
 engaged
 by the
 Divine Love.

engaged, and engaged with all
 the strength that the character
 possesses. It is in the contempla-
 tion of this kindness, sympathy,
 and personal understanding that
 the whole nature is unified, the
 hostility between one part of it
 and another removed, even although some

of the senses may seem to lag behind others in obedience to the will, or require to be cut off for the time for the saving of the rest.¹ The childlike and humble heart, thus unified by its passionate attraction to the Divine tenderness, naturally reflects that tenderness and generosity in all its social relations; and, thus reflecting, naturally finds in every object of its contemplation more attractiveness than it would otherwise find, and in many of those objects very great attractiveness. But the basis of every personal tie between man and man will be the larger bond of devotion to the Divine generosity.

To the heart
thus unified
every natural
object
becomes more
attractive
because of the
super-sensuous
bond in God.

Now, in our Lord's teaching about the family relation we have, on the one hand, the clear and simple principle laid down that the family is according to God's will and not to be abrogated because of any personal unattractiveness in any of the members, that a good husband does not put away his wife, and a good father fail

¹ Matt. v. 30 (Weymouth's translation)

to give good gifts to his children ; and, on the other hand, we have the equally simple and explicit principle that he who loves wife or child more than the Christ is no Christian ;¹ that he who hates not wife and child, and his own life also, in comparison with his love and loyalty to the Christ, cannot be a Christian.² That for which we are to forsake all, that which is to engage our love so entirely that in comparison other attractions will seem like repulsions, is the very ideal of Love itself—the strength of unvarying forgiveness,

the kindness of unvarying bounty, the very Ideal and Reality, both material and spiritual, the perfection and completion, of that very Ideal and Reality of that whose far-off likeness in any human being attracts us. The more we love the Reality of all that attracts us, the more we

shall truly love every object that reflects it ; but the attraction of the reflection will seem like repulsion compared with the attraction of the Reality.

¹ Matt. x. 37.

² Luke xiv. 26.

With this conception of Love, which is God, in our minds, we can go back to our Lord's criticism of our social morality and understand it better. This conception of God helps us to understand the true function of the social unit - the family, which ought never to be broken because of ill-doing or unattractiveness. Among the children of the Kingdom the function of the family—which neither sin nor unattractiveness ought to divide—would naturally be to rear members of society who will be animated by the Divine benevolence that knows no limits, that considers no desert; because they will be born and reared in worship of the universal Father, who is kind not only to the good but to the evil, who suffers from the wickedness of men, being long-suffering, whose kindness is redemptive, having as its end the common weal of creatures who are both spiritual and material.

I think we can see at a glance that the weakness of our orthodox conception of family life is its selfishness. The weakness of our present conception of family life is its selfishness. Unselfishness may abound within the family circle, but thought

of as the unit of economic independence in our industrial system, the family is naturally selfish in relation to the outer world, and this economic selfishness infects other departments of their life. And the personal unselfishness we often see within the circle of the family or class seems only to encourage the selfishness of its objects, and so to effect no worthy result. For instance, how commonly we see a well-intentioned mother sacrificing her own comfort and her own pleasure for her children, and becoming the mere victim of a selfish circle who so absorb all her time and strength with their various requirements that the outflow of her unselfish activity never gets beyond them. In always putting their welfare before her own she finds her activities soaking, as into a sponge, into the pleasure-seeking of those nearest to her, and mainly feeding their selfishness.

Or let us suppose a better case, where the mother imparts to her sons and daughters her own altruism; they devote themselves to making

Mere altruism
panders to
selfishness.

each other happy, which may mean an unselfishness bounded by the family circle, or extending to the wider circle of their own class in life with whom they naturally come into contact. It stands to reason that a man or woman always ready to promote the happiness of another will be fully occupied with those who happen to come nearest; thus the energy of an altruistic family quickly gets sponged up by the absorbent properties of the class or clan to which it belongs. The result appears usually to be only a quickening of class selfishness, which is really no better than family selfishness. How is it that a thing so noble as self-sacrifice can have so ignoble an effect?

The fact is that self-sacrifice is akin to worship. To be justified it requires to be in the service of the Divine or universal ideal. In other words, it must be, consciously or unconsciously, in co-operation with God's purpose for our world that we must lose ourselves if by such losing we may find ourselves. The continuance of the race, the health and efficiency—physical,

intellectual, and moral—of its members, corporate righteousness, joy, and progress—these are, surely, within God's purpose; and therefore all self-sacrifice for these is ennobling, "it blesses him that gives and him that takes." But altruistic sacrifice for the gratifications that tend only to the stagnation of life in any family or group is degrading.

When, instead of mere domestic altruism, we have domestic devotion to a wider, fuller ideal—the world's welfare as each individual can best promote it—we get at once the strong breath of heaven reviving the pettiness of altruistic hedonism. Thus, when the family or circle becomes inspired with devotion to some social cause—religious, scientific, or artistic; when this purpose becomes paramount in the family life, so that the business of making others happy is subordinated to it, what do we find? Do we find less domestic love and happiness? a lower standard of education for the children? less order in the home? less

Devotion to the world's welfare lifts family life to a higher plane.

faithfulness to religious institutions? On the contrary, we find these things not less valued but differently appraised; and we find that the greater spiritual economy with which they are treated raises every one of them to a higher plane. Family pleasure, comfort, self-culture, and religion, when sought as ends, degenerate and wither away, and self-sacrifice in the quest will not hinder degeneracy; when used as means to a Divine and universal good they are elevated and perpetuated. That is why the missionary spirit—using the term in its broadest and deepest application—produces what mere altruism seeks to produce and cannot, in family and social life. The family, too, only finds its life by losing it.

CHAPTER XVIII

RELATION TO THE WORLD

DR. DAVID CAIRNS, in a recent work, tells us that "the Christian life, the life of the Church, is one long crusade for the Kingdom

The whole drift of Christ's teaching demands public spirit. of God. Freed from spiritual and temporal care by faith in God's providence and God's grace, the disciple is to devote himself in the most absolute fashion to the great spiritual commonwealth. . . . No human commonwealth has ever roused so grand an enthusiasm of patriotism in its citizens as burned in the spirit of Jesus for the great City of God. . . . For it His followers are . . . to lose their meaner selves and find their true selves in resolute, thorough-going devotion to its interests. The whole drift

of Christ's teaching is thus to demand public spirit on the largest and grandest scale on behalf of a great divine-human commonwealth."¹

There are many roads on which men travel toward God. The man of science in his passion for truth, the soldier or reformer in his passion for justice, the Buddhist in his rapt passion for the unconditioned—who will say that these shall not attain to Him at length, even when they know not here a name for God? Many of the paths to God that have been called Christianity are no more Christian than the other ways just mentioned. These are lanes, and even tunnels, by which the earnest soul gravitates at length, as all earnest souls must, to the spiritual centre, which is God. There is no end that we can conceive to the pilgrimage of an immortal soul; but how far that course will be one of peace and steadily increasing joy will depend upon the orientation of the soul

All paths of approach to God are good, but only Christianity leads to the central attribute of God, and only Christianity can save the world.

¹ *Christianity in the Modern World*, p. 30.

to the joy of Christ—that joy of world-saving in which all those who attain the Christian heaven share.

All ways of seeking God help to lift the world somewhat, but there is only one way of saving the world from continued sin, and that is the way of Christ. The world will no more be saved by some ways that have been called Christian than it will be saved by Buddhism or science or art or political progress. All these are in their way missionary; every true path to God is a missionary enterprise. All these, by the mercy of God, may and will do something; it is only the Christ of God who can save the world, for He alone reveals God as Lover and Saviour. It is only the Christian course that is *par excellence* the missionary journey. The moment that God is seen, not as a wrathful power from whom man must be saved, but as Himself Lover and Saviour of man, the human missionary spirit emerges into the world as a great force. In any effort to become like such a God—which is the only true worship—man must be

moved by love; and it is self-evident that love must always have an object; the stronger and more universal the love, the more objects it must have. Love must always desire the welfare of its objects, their highest welfare being recognised as the exercise of love. This is where love parts from altruism¹: so to live that the neighbour may also love universally and joyfully is devotion to a super-sensible good which includes, but may never rest in, service to the individual neighbour, while the standard of the service rendered to the individual neighbour can never be hedonistic.

The worship
of God as
Love
produces new
outburst of
missionary
power.

The circle of a loving society in a rude world must always be enlarging itself; for only within the society can love exercise itself unwounded, and only by seeking at all costs to draw all the world within its society can love satisfy its ardours of incidental compassion and its Divine hopes of a world in which love shall exercise

¹ See note E.

its full activities unhurt by any adverse thing.

We can, perhaps, best understand the Christian missionary spirit by comparing it with the war spirit. The first sees the vision of a universal good; the second sees the vision of humanity ranged in two parties, the good of the one necessitating the injury of the other. The first counts property a slave to be used in the service of mankind; the second regards it as a deity to which human sacrifice must, on occasion, be made. The missionary spirit is universal love seeking to enlarge its sphere by service. When pure, it will have no protection and no weapon but the love of God; it will hold every particular material possession only for the purposes of service. This is what underlies the Christian ideal of the Church. It has never been realised in the Church, because she has never conquered and cast out the war spirit of this world-order, and the world spirit and the missionary spirit must continue to interpenetrate each other until

good has cast out evil. The Church did, indeed, once, half-unconsciously, accept her Lord's standard as her ideal, but only so long as she regarded the military and commercial and social systems of the day as doomed to swift destruction. The inspiration of that early time has remained, however, for two thousand years the real Garden of Eden lost by disobedience: the visions of light and beauty revealed in the literature of the New Testament have an inexhaustible fascination for mankind.

The acceptance of Jesus as Messiah is necessary as a foundation for any true Christology. The Messiah was to bring in a new and wholly good social condition, and to destroy the evil world-order that existed. It is only in believing this to be the function of Jesus that we can, in coming to God through Him, obtain a vision of the true God. Dr. Rufus Jones has finely summed up what we learn of God by believing Jesus to be the Christ. "He is immanent Spirit . . .

The function of the Christ and of the Christian missionary is to re-create the world.

God of beauty and organising purpose. He is Life and Light and Truth, an immanent God who can and does show Himself in a personal Incarnation, and so exhibits the course and goal of the race."

But we have no adequate image of the God of Life in our so-called Christian Pantheon. The God of Gold, the God of War, the God of Oppression—these have life-like and powerful images. But the God of Life we can only depict as One Slain! Is it any wonder that our prayers

are a wailing? Faith in God's Christ as He joyfully came hoping and expecting to be received, calling to men to repent and believe that God's reign was within reach, would give us new art, new music, a new rhythm of political life. This would include new art, new music, a new rhythm of political life. This which the missionary spirit is creating. There is, indeed, no barrier which the missionary spirit may not cast down when it is empowered by the worship of the God of all hope.

In "The Vision of Sir Launfal"—a

poem which sets forth very simply indeed the chief problem of human life —we have the Christ of the "Vision of Sir Launfal," vision saying:—

Who gives himself with his life feeds three —
Himself, his hungering neighbour, and Me.

Let us take this as the simplest expression of the basis of messianic activity, and we shall recognise this activity as prevalent even among children and the most destitute of our own land. It is, perhaps, scarcer as we rise in the social scale, but it is of nobler quality because it means more intelligent and greater sacrifice. The greater the consciousness of individual significance, the greater the sacrifice when the individual life is poured out as water upon the ground, for the universal life; but the greater also the assurance that the sacrifice will not be in vain, that, in fact, it is the only swift path to the joy of God.

Our Lord's Messianic consciousness

made the yielding up of His life in apparent dishonour and insignificance the supreme human sacrifice. He believed that He possessed for mankind a gift that no other man possessed; it followed that by living He could have done more for men than could any other man. When faced, earlier or later, with the knowledge that He must either compromise the purity of His religious vision, or stir up force to resist evil, or perish to the world's eye in miserable dishonour, the faith that the sacrifice would not be in vain was a part of His Messianic consciousness.

Our Lord's Messianic consciousness is its supreme example.

In harmony with this, whenever we see men rising in the scale of conscious individual significance, in the intelligent possession of Divine gifts, we can also see the development of the missionary spirit which refuses to use these gifts for individual aggrandisement of any kind, and refuses to put them at the service of the war spirit in any of its phases. With increase of

consciousness of the significance of individual life the missionary spirit becomes nobler and more efficacious. This fact is an illustration of the point so ably developed by Professor Royce in his new book, *The Problem of Christianity*, that the highest community life depends upon the definiteness of the conception of individual personality, that therefore any conception of the unity of humanity which weakens the significance of individuality is false to the true ideal.¹

The missionary spirit increases the definiteness of individual personality.

This missionary spirit of which we are speaking is the love that is always ardent to forgive the enemy, to do good to the injurious, to be tender-hearted to the spiteful; for it the greatest evil will always be hardness of heart—taking shape in the desire in any way to injure, to weaken or detract from, any of its fellow-creatures that lie, and must always lie, in the bosom of what it recognises as the character of the Godhead—Love.

¹ Prof. Royce, *op. cit.* Lect. X. section 5.

As the methods, then, of the missionary spirit will never be the methods of the war spirit, the metaphors we borrow from war and apply to the conquests of love are misleading. The wrestling of human love is not, strictly speaking, a warfare ; it is a passion, a baptism ; it conquers the hard world by the glow of its affectionate hope while enduring the very wounds which the world gives. It is, even within its own community, straitened in all its natural delights until this baptism be accomplished. The equipment of love—that which stands both for armour of defence and weapon of offence—is the inward, re-creative power of God, the power of the creative will to bring forth a new heaven and a new earth by the joy and ingenuity of love, and, above all, in the tragic hour, by the ardour of compassionate hope in the patient endurance of the utmost wrong.

Now, this re-creative force, which is love's weapon and defence, the strong tower

Metaphors
borrowed
from war are
misleading
when applied
to the
conquests
of love.

and the gleaming sword of the servant of God, is a power that we call supernatural. If we mean by "supernature" the higher nature that takes control of the lower nature, it is a good word. As vegetable life turns mineral substance into life and growth; as animal life turns vegetable substance into instinct and intelligence; so the life of love turns the activities and institutions of antagonism into the activities and institutions of pure love. "This is the deed of God, and it is miraculous in our eyes." It is not unnatural, but it is the manifestation of an order of nature to which we have so little directed our attention that we are, as it were, just barely conscious of its existence. It is the working of the law of life in our members, to which our eyes are so little opened that we have called the law of sin and death "nature," thereby stultifying the God of nature. And we have called this new law "supernature," thinking Him to be more honoured in the overriding of

Love is the supernatural power of the Creator poured into the natural powers of man, and is invincible.

His creation than in its natural fulfilment. But it really does not matter for the present argument whether we regard the manifestation of the Divine power in the affairs of men as natural or as external to nature. My point is that only one belief can justify love in setting out to conquer the world by the methods of love, and love alone—the belief that all the brute strength of man, all the world's armaments, all the strength of civic institutions based upon physical force, all the power of corporate antagonisms, are, when opposed to love, as the hardness of the earth's crust to the force of the expanding seed; are as the errant forces in earth and air and fire and water to the ingenuity of man that makes them servants of his pleasure-house; are, in fact, only as the power of mere man when pitted against the power of God and man combined. It is this conviction and the activities that arise from it that are essential to Christianity. It is this conviction only that justifies love in steadfastly refusing to recognise any combination of the missionary

spirit and the war spirit as God-appointed, in refusing to inflict hardness even when she is compelled to endure hardness, while she insists that the attitude of Jesus Christ toward His murderers was the manifestation of the eternal attitude of God toward sinners.

Have we any warrant for thinking that after the incident we call "death" the affinities or sympathies of the soul—its powers of insight or its lack of them—will be suddenly altered? If it were so this life could bear no real relation to the next. But if there is no such alteration, each soul will go out into the unknown as a ship that carries a telegraphic receiver attuned to a certain rate of electric vibrations and in possible communication only with those who send messages similarly attuned. Or we may think of such a soul as one who comes a wayfarer to some community and finds his friends only among those whom he can understand and who understand him; or again, as a player joining some great orchestra where the part he can take will depend upon his power to

understand the music. We cannot believe that any soul will fail to find all the good that it is capable of appreciating, but we seem to have no reason to believe that it will be even aware of the existence of joys and of loyalties in the Communion of Saints to which it has never become susceptible.

Love's pilgrim soul has underfoot here and now the eternal fact of the Cross of God—the revelation that the ideal human love, and the vast omnipotent Divine Love, suffers in triumphant patience under neglect and disobedience and injury. Love's pilgrim has in hand the omnipotent art of God, by virtue of which he creates an everlasting pathway for men by journeying on, and builds, by mere vitality, everlasting rooms in the temple of humanity. Love's pilgrim has for movement the creative rhythm of God—warm sunshine and refreshing shade, work and rest, joy and grief, intimacy and awe. Love's pilgrim has at heart perpetual comfort—the ever new, ever alluring, ever conquering, friendship of God.

Power and
vindication
of the
pilgrim soul.

NOTES

NOTE A

Pp. 9, 121. "Our Lord's teaching was, in fact, so original as to be superficially inconsistent. The tradition of the Elders (said He) is inconsistent with the Word of God, the Law revealed to Moses : well, then, the tradition of the Elders must go. But in the matter of Divorce it is the Law of Moses itself that was given for the hardness of men's hearts ; well, then, the Law of Moses must go. In the matter of the Sabbath it is the very Law of God, which, according to the Jewish view, God Himself has kept from the beginning, that comes into conflict with duties of kindness and beneficence ; well, then, even the Law of God is to be broken, as David did. What does all this mean, but that the supreme sanction lay not in any Code or set of Rules, however promulgated, but in an enlightened conscience, a mind really in harmony with the mind of the Father in Heaven ?" — *The Gospel History and its Transmission*, Prof. Burkitt, p. 175.

Cp. Luke vi. 1-11 and 27-38 ; x. 37 ; xvii. 2 ; Matt. ix. 13 ; xii. 7 ; xxiii. 23.

NOTE E

P. 139. As this book is being printed an incident has occurred which illustrates my point.

An engine-driver, of long service, has been sentenced to imprisonment for having wrecked his train through failure to mark the signals he passed. By thus neglecting his first duty he obviously caused the death or injury of many passengers, but his own escape was almost a miracle.

Could any of us, unless wont had trained us to accept legal penalties as necessary, believe that sending this man to prison will deter others from doing the like? If neither the fear of an appalling and almost certain death, nor of shocking disablement, nor of being held up to public execration for having by carelessness brought like fate on others, deters a man in that position from such carelessness, is it not clear that the fear of two months' imprisonment will not do it? People say that the penalty which an offence naturally entails loses its effectiveness through familiarity; but exactly in the same way do legal penalties lose their effect; as soon as they are made legal the thought of them must become familiar to the man who runs the risk.

NOTE C

P. 159. "Is there any justification for war?" Or rather—for we want to go below the surface to the root of the matter, and must think not so much

of war and peace as of the war spirit and the peace spirit—'Is there any justification for that habit of mind that facilitates war and is preoccupied with preparation for war?'

"For guidance we look to the Bible, and see that our Lord says, 'Love your enemies; pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you.'

"*There is no alternative* as to the habit of mind in our Lord's teaching.

"If this be so, why are we not rid of war long ago? Why has not this teaching had its legitimate effect? It is due to three things that we lack:—

"(i.) We lack—and this accounts for the failure of our acceptance of this teaching—*Imagination*. It has never occurred to people that there is a possibility of doing without war. We are faced by a kind of stupidity that we cannot imagine a state of things in which war does not play a part as a recognised institution.

"(ii.) We also lack *Hope*. This is a lack in people who are zealous for peace as well as in people who are not. It is a common saying that 'men being what they are,' or 'things being what they are, you cannot expect this or that to happen.' But why are these people without hope?

"(iii.) 'Without hope—without God.' This explanation leads to a third great lack—we lack *Faith* in God. We do not really believe that God will govern the world in His own way. Our standpoint is the human standpoint, and not simply the Divine one."—Rev. Dr. Frere, of the Community of the

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Resurrection, in sermon preached at Leeds, June 1913.

"It is sometimes said that the abolition of war would be a serious loss to civilisation. People have been known to quote with approval, even in Christian circles, the terrible words of the great German strategist, 'A perpetual peace is a dream, and not even a beautiful dream.' . . . 'War,' we are told, 'is a school of patriotism.' Yes; if by patriotism we mean that low form of it which bases the greatness of our country on the sufferings and humiliation of others. To destroy the armed forces of a hostile state and ruin its industries does undoubtedly cause exultation. But patriotism of this sort is unchristian and anti-human. True patriotism measures greatness by the services rendered to civilisation and humanity, not by injury done to both.

"*War is a means of inculcating discipline, and developing the virtues of courage and self-sacrifice.*' The obedience taught by military discipline is of necessity mechanical and unreasoning, whereas the obedience of a good citizen should be an intelligent submission to authority that he helps to create and maintain. . . . It is true that war may be a school of heroism and loyalty, but it is at least as often a school of violence and self-indulgence. . . . He must be strangely ignorant of trade, manufacture, mining, commerce, navigation, exploration, and sport, who maintains that peace means of necessity sloth and luxury.

"*War leads to the survival of the fittest among nations.*"

. . . One might as well argue in favour of making the best shot in a country into its Archbishop or Prime Minister. The Ottoman Turks were for generations the most efficient fighting men in Europe ; but nevertheless the capture of Constantinople did not conduce to the advance of civilisation.

"*War is the means of preventing the domination of un-
civilised States or the triumph of lower races.*" As things are, there can be no certainty that war will not bring about one or other of these two evils. A new Napoleon Bonaparte is by no means an impossibility ; and a new Tamerlane might lead the millions of the Far East to the overthrow of Western civilisation."—Rev. T. J. Lawrence, M.A., LL.D., in leaflet published by the Church of England Peace League.

NOTE D

P. 227. "There is at least a danger of the enthusiastic revolutionary's overlooking what the present system does, and therefore weighting himself with a heavy burden which he need not bear ; and, further, of his unduly simplifying the problem and laying up bitter disappointment for himself, by taking for granted that if he can hit upon some completely new system that gives some promise of doing that portion of the social work which the present system fails to do, it can be trusted also to accomplish that immense portion that the present does."—Rev. P. H. Wicksteed in address on *The Social Ideals and Economic Doctrines of Socialism*.

NOTE E

Pp. 260, 273. "The value of loyalty can be readily defined in simply human terms. Man, the social being, naturally, and in one sense helplessly, depends on his communities. Sundered from them, he has neither worth nor wit, but wanders in waste places, and, when he returns, finds the lonely house of his individual life empty, swept, and garnished.

"But, on the other hand, his communities, to which he owes all his natural powers, train him by teaching him the arts of spiritual hatred. The result is distraction—spiritual death. Escape through any mere multitude of loves for other individuals is impossible. For such loves, unless they are united by some supreme loyalty, are capricious fondnesses for other individuals, who, by nature and by social training, are as lonely and as distracted as their lover himself. Mere altruism is no cure for the spiritual disease of cultivation.

" . . . Loyalty, if it comes at all, has the value of a love which does not so much renounce the individual self as devote the self, with all its consciousness and its powers, to an all-embracing unity of individuals in one realm of spiritual harmony. The object of such devotion is, in ideal, the community which is absolutely lovable, because absolutely united, conscious, but above all distractions of the separate self-will of its members. Loyalty demands many members, but one body; many gifts, but one spirit.

"The value of this ideal lies in its vision of an activity which is endless, but always at rest in its own harmony. . . . This was Paul's beatific vision, granted him even while he was in the life of earthly tribulation, the vision of the Charity which never faileth — the vision of Charity as still the greatest of the Christian graces in the world whereto the saved are to be translated."—Professor Royce, *The Problem of Christianity*, vol. i. Lecture VI.

THE END

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